

THE MIX

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Issue 77
Midsummer 00

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The Music Production Magazine

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08

NOT JUST A5000



THE 5000

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Tone generation method: AWM2

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• **D/A conversion:** 24-bit 8-times oversampling

• **Input frequency:** 48, 44.1, 32 kHz **Output frequency:**

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stereo), Digital input (with AIEB1 I/O

expansion board) 48 kHz, 44.1 kHz, 32

kHz • **Internal sample memory capacity:**

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• **Maximum sampling time:** (mono or stereo)

6 minutes 20 seconds (44.1 kHz) 12 minutes

40 seconds (22.05 kHz) 25 minutes 21 seconds

(11.025 kHz) 50 minutes 43 seconds (5.5125 kHz)

• **Effects:** 6 independent effect blocks (A4000: 3 blocks)

plus individual sample EQ • **Filters:** 126 (A4000 :

64) each with 16 different types • **Included**

software: Parameter editor application

(Mac/PC) plus 9 sample CD-ROMs



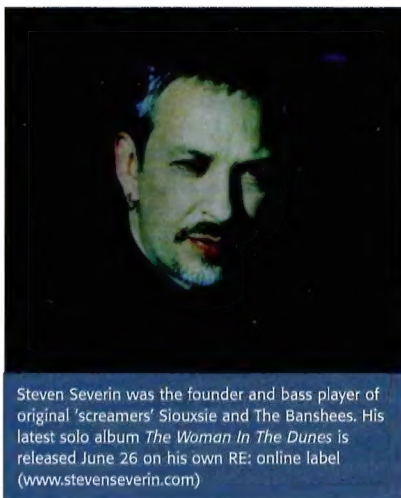
Also available: A4000 (£999*) *RRP inc. VAT



YAMAHA

www.yamaha.co.uk

My invisible friend



Steven Severin was the founder and bass player of original 'screamers' Siouxsie and The Banshees. His latest solo album *The Woman In The Dunes* is released June 26 on his own RE: online label (www.stevenseverin.com)

It was a revelation. I don't play the piano that well, but I love programming the guts out of an analogue synth. I don't particularly like playing bass, but I liked making it sound like a behemoth or a choir of angels. So, for me, MIDI, synthesis and editing created a utopia.

Today I can walk into the studio with nothing prepared and score a 'piece' – I try not to even touch the mother keyboard. I go straight to the editor pages, create a 'part', fill it with a series of 'notes', and start inventing sounds, systems and shapes. Nine times out of 10 it works, or at least shows me a new plan. I auto-quantise everything, as I believe that the feel of a track is inherent in the sound and the dynamic of the arrangement – not in the mathematics. All those groove filters are nonsense.

Neither am I a naturalist. I don't care if a track is physically impossible or if an instrument is stretched beyond its range. I'm not trying to recreate a band or ensemble. That would only limit the sonic possibilities – in fact, the more implausible the better. You might find you are closing in on something new; if not, then it will at least have something fresh. Reaching is all.

I rarely sample. It's too time-consuming and pulls your focus into cul-de-sacs. That said, a good sample can be the springboard to something else. Work on top of it, then mute it. Where are you now?

Of course, thousands of people all over the world now work with these DIY tools, particularly in what is lazily known as 'dance culture'. Now there's an oxymoron for you. Two fat Italians hiding behind a misspelt beige logo, more like. I digress. It's all punk to me. Or maybe Dada.

Steven Severin

For many people, my move into computer-assisted electronic music since the demise of the Banshees has been a surprise. It shouldn't be. Anyone who followed my career with the Banshees should have surmised that there was a flagrant disregard and disrespect for the genres and definitions of pop music. Being a dedicated non-musician (my first instrument was a reel-to-reel tape recorder when I was 13), the shift was inevitable. For me, it's always been the idea of a song that is paramount. Anyone can be an artisan – few are visionaries. Of course, I appreciate great musicianship, but it rarely inspires me, and I certainly don't regard it with awe.

I only have to look back to the Banshees' first performance to reinvigorate my credo. It's my lodestone: an impromptu rambling version of 'The Lord's Prayer' (sprinkled with a merciless butchery of such 'classics' as 'Knocking On Heaven's Door' and 'Smoke On the Water') executed by a group of amateurs who were lucky enough to steal that window of opportunity and make it their own. A giant leap of faith and gargantuan self-belief and you have a 20-year back-catalogue.

I've been using computer sequencing software since 1983. Back then, only toys were available, and it wasn't until I was introduced to Steinberg's Pro 24 in 1987 that I started to see what an incredible tool my computer could be.



about THE MIX

THE MIX is the essential accessory for the recording studio. Our equipment reviews, written by working producers and engineers, give you an impartial opinion of the latest studio and recording gear, and our interviews get to the heart of the current techniques and issues in the recording industry.

THE MIX cover-mounted CD helps you produce better music, by providing a varied monthly selection of collectable studio-quality samples provided by some of the top pro's in the business, demos of the latest software and hardware, and audio tutorials demonstrating contemporary recording techniques.

The MIX ISSUE 77 – Midsummer 2000

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Media with passion

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Roland take sampling to dizzying new heights with the most radical technology since sampling was born. *Sean Vincent* reveals all

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The diminutive compressor that sounds as good as it is affordable. The Really Nice Compressor flies over from America and lands in *Steve Evans'* studio

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Jon Musgrave slips into the wonderful world of analogue modelling with Korg's acclaimed new rackmount synth

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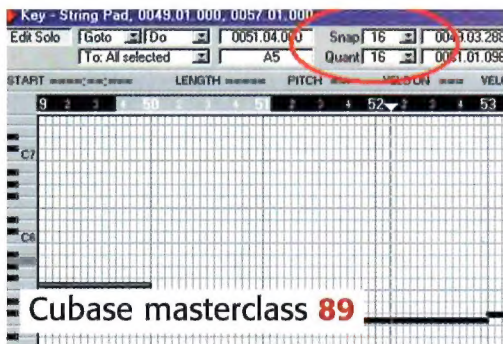
The team at TC conjure up a couple of plug-ins to aid hard disk recording – and they're not just for fixing dodgy vocals, y'know! *Seb Pecchia* dives in



Bomb Factory 36



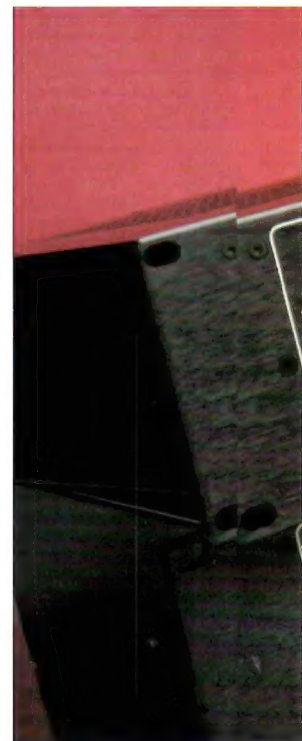
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Cubase masterclass 89



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Roland VP-9000 **26**



Drawmer 1969 **32**

**WIN A
REMIX
DEAL!**
SEE PAGE 78 FOR
FULL DETAILS

sound advice

72 Remix Tips

REMIX!

Not only is our entire *Remix Special* packed full of advice from a bunch of top pros, we've got some serious tips from *Coldcut*, *DJ Vadim* and *Alan Branch*

89 Cubase Masterclass

Let our resident Cubase guru *Adam Crute* ease those sequencing blues. This month he looks at MIDI editors

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57 Top Remix Guns

REMIX!

The Remix feature to beat all others – we've rounded up 14 world-class remixers, including *Spike Stent*, *Artful Dodger*, *Joey Negro* and *Timo Maas*, to tell it like it is

75 Tidy Trax Results

REMIX!

At long last – the official verdict on every single entry received for our Tidy Trax remix competition in issue 71. How did you fare...?

78 Remix Competition

REMIX!

In case you're getting 'remix withdrawal', here comes the next competition – with *two* chances to win!

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cd contents

software

track 1

MAC

Prosoniq North Pole

This free FX plug-in features a fully programmable virtual analogue synth filter with resonance, envelope follower and integrated delay.

Freeverb p.12

The fantastic free reverb plug-in that's been getting rave reviews from everyone who's tried it.

TC Works Voice Tools p.54

TC's latest plug-in bundle specifically tailored to make light work of vocal work. The Intonator and Voice Strip get the once over in a full review this month Here's a demo for TDM systems.

Bomb Factory p.36

Why not try out the Bomb Factory on your Pro Tools system for a couple of weeks? With plug-in bundles including the classic Urei 1176 and Teletronix LA2A compressors, SansAmp emulations and a MoogerFooger, there's something for everyone!

PC

Prosoniq North Pole

A free filter plug-in. See the Mac software listing above for details.

Bomb Factory

Demo of the hot plug-in bundles. See the Mac software listing above for details.

Freeverb

The free reverb plug-in that's set tongues wagging – see Mac software listing, above.

TC Native Essentials demo

TC's Voice Tools isn't available for PC, so console yourself with a demo of their excellent Native Essentials.

PSP Flight

Bored while programming? This could be for you – a VST plug-in game, so load it up, sit back and get ready to play.

demo of the month

track 2

Perfect Virus: 'Demo' p.96

Industrial and dark drum'n'bass anthem with dark, manic guitars, squelchy bass and grooves to die for.

remix competition

track 3

'There's a Shadow' – full track

tracks 4-7 (also as WAV/AIFF on track 1)

'There's a Shadow' – composite parts p. 78

track 4 *Remix parts: keyboards

track 5 *Remix parts: loops

track 6 *Remix parts: strings

track 7 *Remix parts: vocals

Note: the samples listed on tracks 4-7 may only be used for the purposes of the remix competition in this issue of *The Mix*. Bennett/Tacye © 2000 Minder Music

gear demos

track 8-10

Roland VP-9000 p.26

track 8

*Roland's own demo of the VP – but who's that singing like a funk-up dance renegade? Why, it's none other than Jay Kay, Jamiroquai's dance-crazy frontman! Kay/Smith/Zender/Mckenzie/Buchanan/Katz © Sony S2 © EMI Music Publishing Ltd

please read before using the samples on this CD!

All equipment demos, as well as samples marked * on the listing on these pages, are not licensed for commercial use. Samples that are not marked * may be used freely within any musical composition, provided they are credited to *The Mix Studio Series*.

gear demos

track 9

Now hear Roland's revolutionary new sampler at work on some loops and marvel as it breaks all the usual sampling rules...

track 10

...and here trying some other VP-style sampling tricks – do not adjust your set!

track 11-12

Korg MS2000R p.50

track 11

The MS2000R is put through its paces in the studio

- i. Waveseq preset with mod sequence changes
- ii. Crazy Arpeg preset demonstrating virtual patches
- iii. Auto Disco preset demonstrating mod sequence
- iv. Using the external audio input
- v. Vocoder presets

track 12

Some choice sounds from the MS2000R:

- i. Stab Saw Pad (5 octaves of C)
- ii. Drive Bass (C, G, C, G)
- iii. Deep Bells (5 octaves of C and G)
- iv. Minibass (3 octaves of C and G)
- v. MS101 Square (5 octaves of C and G)
- vi. High Voltage (3 octaves of C and G)
- vii. Bad Dream sound FX
- viii. Surrounded sound FX
- ix. Invaders sound FX



samples

tracks 13-17 (also in WAV/AIFF format on track 1)

Paul Janes
Untidy Sample Collection

track 13: Loops
@140BPM

- i. 9090909
- ii. bacon booty
- iii. bingobongo
- iv. clap trap
- v. en garde
- vi. ready salted
- vii. scum queen
- viii. shaketastic
- ix. skittles attack

track 14: EQ'd hats and cymbals

- i. 707 open hat
- ii. 909 bright crash
- iii. 909 bright crash rev
- iv. 909 closed hat lo
- v. 909 closed hat lofi
- vi. 909 open hat hi
- vii. 909 open hat lo

- viii. 909 open hat lofi
- ix. 909 ride
- x. 909 ride hi
- xi. 909 top hat
- xii. dull crash
- xiii. misc hat 1
- xiv. misc hat 2
- xv. misc hat 3
- xvi. misc hat 4
- xvii. misc hat 5
- xviii. misc hat 6
- xix. misc hat 7
- xx. ride hat

track 15: Kicks

- i. helium
- ii. klik
- iii. overdriven
- iv. plastic
- v. solid state
- vi. untidy fat

track 16: Snap, crackle & pop

- i. cheap clap
- ii. crackle
- iii. pop

- iv. snap
- v. sneezy
- vi. untidy

track 17: Synths

- i. boing
- ii. bounce
- iii. chainsaw
- iv. d-choon
- v. dred
- vi. final round
- vii. glass cutter
- viii. hi score
- ix. honk
- x. inhaler
- xi. lately
- xii. more grunge
- xiii. moviedrone
- xiv. ooowwww
- xv. overlord
- xvi. powertools
- xvii. pure
- xviii. round 1
- xix. round 2
- xx. the force
- xxi. x-mod
- xxii. zzub

This month's Sound Factory samplst

Paul Janes

Hard house producer Paul Janes was one of the original founding members of the Tidy Trax label in 1995. Since then, he has written and produced over 200 original tracks and remixes under various guises, including the successful *Untidy Dubs* series – with probably his most well-known release being Untidy DJ's 'Funky Groove'.

Paul has worked with top hard house DJs Ian M, Anne Savage, Lisa Lashes, Andy Farley and Fergie, as well as hard house legend Tony De Vit, co-writing and producing Tony's last single 'The Dawn'.

Along with fellow producer Paul King, Paul has recently launched new hard house label Overdose Records. Check out their current release, Terrance & Phillip's 'We Make The Bass'. To find out more about what Paul's up to, point your browser at: www.overdoserecords.co.uk.



Roland VP-9000 **tracks 8-10**



Korg MS2000R **tracks 11-12**



Netscape Online

Netscape Online: the free internet service in association with Future Publishing

track 1

Sign up for the new FREE Netscape Online Service, sponsored by Future Publishing and featuring content from Future Publishing's web sites.

Netscape Online brings you all your internet needs – browse the web easily with Netscape Navigator, organise your email with Netscape Messenger, and create great web pages with Netscape Composer – and all for free!

With one easy click, Netscape Online gives you...

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 - Up-to-the-minute news and weather for home and abroad
 - Coverage of and links to all your favourite sports
 - Comprehensive financial information
 - Games for all your favourite formats, from Mac to Dreamcast
- Make Netscape Online part of your daily routine. Load it up from *The Mix* CD now.

The screenshot shows the Netscape Online website with a search bar at the top. Below the search bar, there are several sections: 'SPORT' with a 'QXL' logo, 'LATEST SPORT NEWS' featuring a headline about the World Cup, 'RUGBY' with a 'LIVE SCORES' section, and 'EUROPEAN NEWS' with a headline about the Euro Cup. The interface is designed to provide quick access to sports and news content.

news

If it's new and it's music production, it's here. All the gear, gossip and goings-on from a month in the biz...

Trans-Europe Fostex

Three multitrackers, one mixer and an active monitoring system – it's full steam ahead for Fostex...

Following on from our NAMM report in issue 74, multitracking maestros Fostex have added yet again to the multitude of choice available to home and project studio recordists. Those for whom cost and space is at a premium may well appreciate the compact yet racey curves of Fostex's VF-16 digital recorder/mixer (£1,099). This cheeky little number features 16 tracks of uncompressed audio (with eight additional 'ghost tracks' for multiple takes), two built-in effects, 3-band EQ, assignable channel compressors and a master compressor. SCSI ports are provided for WAV file export/import and backup.

For those favouring a more modular approach to digital multitracking, Fostex's new 16- and 8-track recorders, the D1624 (£2,350) and D824 (£1,499), could fit the bill – and pocket. Both offer a variety of uncompressed recording formats (between 24-bit, 96kHz and 16-bit, 48kHz), unlimited 'undos' and full external MIDI control. The recorders give up to 2,820 track minutes on a 15Gb hard drive – nearly enough for a three-hour, 16-track masterpiece using the D1624, if our maths serves us correctly!



The choice for home and project studio recordists grows yet again with Fostex's VF-16 (top) and VM88



Speaking of things modular, Fostex have unveiled their first 8-input digital mixer, the VM88 (£549). Clearly from the same styling stable as the VF-16, all eight channels have 3-band EQ, phantom power, individual inserts, two auxiliary sends, stereo effects and direct outs. The VM88 offers 24-bit A/D, 20-bit D/A converters and a 44.1 sampling rate – should sound pretty good, then.

Fostex are also making their first foray into the field of active monitoring with the NF-1A speaker system. Bi-amped with two proprietary 60W amplifiers, the NF-1A (£499 each) incorporates a range of adjustable filters to handle the response of different rooms. Its woofers are made up from wood and banana pulp fibres...

Prices: see above
More from: SCV London
Tel: 020 7923 1892
Web: www.scvlondon.co.uk



The D1624: whack a 15Gb drive in there for 2,820 minutes of 24-bit recording

The virtual cream of the crop

CreamWare announce pro modular synth, and a good thing gets even better as Pulsar II ships



Following its eagerly-anticipated Musikmesse 2000 preview, software sovereigns CreamWare are shipping the latest incarnation of their Pulsar DSP system, Pulsar II - an apt appellation, if ever there was one! As announced, the revised software is both Mac- and Windows-compatible from the outset, a disarmingly refreshing change that is sure to go down well on both sides of the platform divide.

The new Pulsar II PCI card features six Analog Devices SHARC DSPs - a 50% DSP power increase over its predecessor, no less. This equals more simultaneous synths, effects, mixer functions, or higher sound generator polyphony. More bar

Spec-wise, the 24-bit, 96kHz buss for seamless integration v venerable SCOPE family, from

new makeover. In its basic configuration, the system features 20 I/Os: stereo analogue, stereo S/PDIF and 2 x ADAT. Alternatively, a 24 I/O daughterboard with three ADAT interfaces can be used. Additional new devices include shelving EQs, new compressors and limiters. The new ASIO 2.0 driver should prove useful, too.

For those with a few less readies at the ready, Pulsar II SRB may just be the ticket - a Pulsar II 'light', in effect, packing four SHARC DSPs and a singular S/TDM buss. A standard PC can accommodate up to three Pulsar II SRB or Pulsar II cards at any one time.

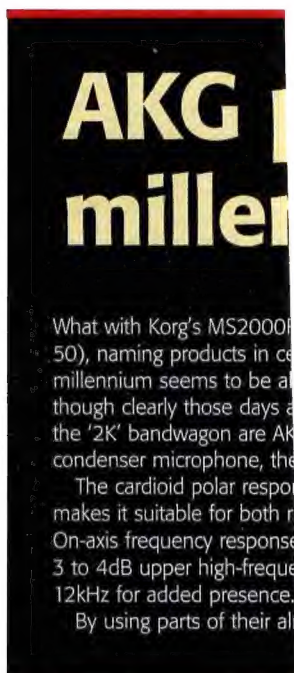
Pulsar II users registering their purchase via the internet within a specific time period qualify for a free, completely redesigned and upgraded version of CreamWare's Modular 2 soft synth for their troubles. Can't be bad. On the subject of freebies, Pulsar II will be made available to existing Pulsar users as a free update.

And on the subject of soft synths, CreamWare are set to launch Elektra, a professional modular synth system on a PCI card. Based on a combination of software and DSP hardware, the system will be available to both Mac and Windows users.

On the software side, Elektra boasts more than 140 modules, which can be freely interconnected with virtual patch cords. Sounds familiar? The modules allow virtual analogue, FM and sample-based synthesis, with WAV, AIFF and Akai S1000 sample format recognition. All Elektra instruments are fully responsive via standard MIDI controllers.

The 24-bit, 96kHz quality Elektra PCI card hosts three Analog Devices SHARC DSPs, enabling the modular synth to be played just like a hardware instrument - should certainly appeal to any similarly modular-obsessed (yet fiscally- and real estate-challenged) Hans Zimmer wannabes out there!

Elektra II 2000 Pulsar II SRB £700



What with Korg's MS2000 (50), naming products in the millennium seems to be a thing, though clearly those days of the '2K' bandwagon are a thing of the past. The AKG Miller condenser microphone, the

The cardioid polar response makes it suitable for both near and far field recording. On-axis frequency response is flat from 20Hz to 20kHz, with a 3 to 4dB upper high-frequency shelf for added presence.

By using parts of their al

Pole's position

Pole, aka Stephan Betke's *Pole 3* album weaves minimalist, dub-style loops with frugal melodies and bass to produce an electronic sound all his own. *The Mix* tracked him down...

The latest Pole album (*Pole 3*) has a refreshing, lo-fi sound. Tell us a bit about your attitude towards technology when making music?

The record seems lo-fi. It's not that I don't have equipment in my studio, it's just that I want it to sound like it is. It comes a bit from record influences or recording technologies from the late '70s. But the technology's not so important to me because you can do good stuff with lots of different instruments.

Are there any new instruments you're interested in picking up for your studio?

The Nord Modular – this is my discovery of the last year – with the computer matrix and really good virtual analogue sounds. I think it sits perfectly in the Pole collection and gives me new possibilities of creating another sound.

And you use a computer for sequencing?

Yeah, Logic Audio. It's the most comfortable multitrack sequencer I've ever used.

What do you think about 24-bit/96kHz?

Everyone is just upgrading, upgrading – to what end? For example I'm using some software on my laptop, and I get an update which the laptop won't run, so now I have to spend another 7,000 deutschmarks upgrading the laptop.

Well, that's playing the game!

Well, I don't want to play the game, so I stopped buying the software, and that's it!

Well, that's fair enough...

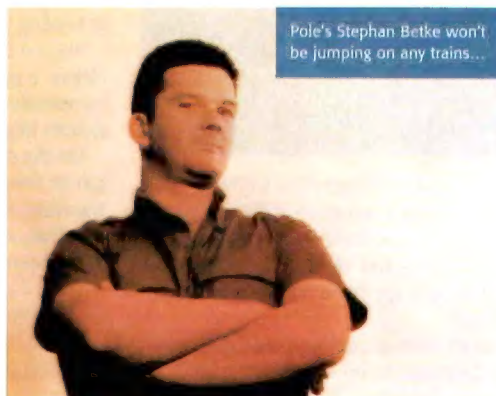
It just doesn't make sense to jump on these trains. You know...?

Well, next year it's all going to be 32-bit, and then 64-bit...

Endless, endless time.

Thank you, Stephan.

Pole 3 is out now. Pole v Four Tet is out on vinyl June 26th



Pole's Stephan Betke won't be jumping on any trains...

in brief

Watt, more amps?

QSC Audio have launched three new entry-level power amplifiers, ranging in price and power from the 300W per channel RMX850 (£460) to the £730 RMX2450 – king of the QSQ hill at 750W per channel. The 'MOR' 450W RMX1450 sits somewhere in between at £550. Each 2U unit is less than 16" in depth, and packs a comprehensive set of features, including XLR and balanced 1/4" inputs, and Speakon and binding post outputs. User-defeatable clip limiters and selectable, low-frequency filters optimise audio system performance to suit.

More from: HW International

Tel: 020 8808 2222

Web: www.hwinternational.co.uk

V for victory

Roland's V-studio range of hard disk recorders just got bigger with the VS-890 8-track (£1,399) effectively 'upgrading' the original 20-bit VS-880EX to true 24-bit status, thanks to its superior A/D and D/A converters. (Watch out for Roland's forthcoming VS-880-, VS-890- and VS-1880-compatible CD burner, the CDR-53, set to retail at £449.)

The VS-840 GX (£999) improves upon the entry-level VS-840, increasing the number of virtual tracks to 128. Other handy features include a disk containing pre-recorded backing tracks in eight different musical styles for jamming purposes, and speaker modelling.

More from: Roland

Tel: 01792 702701

Web: www.roland.co.uk

Get in there

Get Out There is BT's current initiative to propel unsigned acts to stardom. In addition to the prizes on offer, every month top industry names judge and analyse the best tracks. In June, catch Radio 1 DJ Mary Anne Hobbs offering production tips and advice, whilst in July DJ and head of Talkin' Loud Records Gilles Peterson gives acts the benefit of his experience. For details, visit www.getoutthere.bt.com.

Pro Tools for post-pro



Soho-based post-pro house Molinaire is the latest on the long list of studios to take the plunge into Pro Tools, with the purchase of a Mix Plus 5.0 system running on an Apple G4. As well as the version 5 software, the Molinaire set-up includes Digidesign's 888 interface and a 24-track digital dubbing mixer Nick Fry, pictured with the new system, said "It's incredibly powerful, easy to use and really helps to speed up the sound designing process," and then proceeded to put it to the test on sound design for the BBC2 comedy *The League of Gentlemen*. The system was supplied by Centre/Syco.

Get your socks off, Andy!

Pink Floyd mix man first in line for the Fatman...



After our favourable review of TL Audio's Fatman Fat 1 stereo valve compressor in issue 75, it hasn't taken long for the engineering 'big boys' to start muscling in on this expansive-sounding little beast. And they don't come much bigger than twice Grammy-nominated Andy Jackson – in professional stature, we might add!

Jackson's association with the mighty Floyd dates back to *The Wall* movie of 1981, and has since included knob-twiddling duties on *The Final Cut*, *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* and *The Division Bell* albums (every studio excursion the 'prolific', flying pig-fixated ones have made since '81, in other words).

Describing his first encounter with the Fat 1, Jackson commented: "I was initially sceptical about whether a compressor with preset programs would actually work in practice, but I have to say the unit simply blew my socks off! It sounds astonishingly good in manual mode, and the presets work incredibly well. I found the mix programs particularly impressive, and overall the Fat 1 made everything I put it through sound huge. How it can be done at this price, I'll never know."

He likes it, then. Now, when can we expect a new album from Gilmour & Co? More to the point – will it be phat, man?

More from: TL Audio
Tel: 01462 680888
Web: www.tlaudio.co.uk

in brief

Hit that perfect beat

Having opened its 'doors' to the world on 1 June, HitQuarters.com (www.HitQuarters.com) could well change your world. And free of charge, too. An on-line, one-stop guide to the makers and shakers in the music biz, its mission is to direct you to the person or persons most likely to break your act. And how do they purport to do this? Easy. A track record search engine called HitTracker allows you to see who was credited with breaking a particular act. So you can target those people most likely to fit your musical requirements. But will it work? Only time can tell...

BairFoot in the park

Strongroom studio owner Richard Boote and Interactive PSL's John Fairs, Prodigy's live manager for the last six years, have joined forces to form 'ubermanagement' team BairFoot. Together, they will continue to manage their roster of six producers as well as acts Happy Gilmore, Flightcrank and Southern Fly. Future expansion is on the cards.

More from: BairFoot

Tel: 020 7426 5130

Web: www.bairfoot.com

Future Music

The July issue of *Future Music* features a test of the bright orange Microwave XTK wavetable synth and the sexy new Roland SP-808EX sampler and studio in a box. They've got an interview with ATB plus a step-by-step tutorial to recreating some classic trance sounds, and a competition to win a trip to Berlin to master your music in Future Loop Foundation's studio. Best of luck!



Plug-in corner

Sean Vincent's monthly guide to the hottest plug-ins in town.

Drum sampler improvements

Last month on *The Mix* cover CD we featured the free DR005 drumsample player from FXpansion. Well now they've come up with a fully featured version, the DR005, and it's got the lot. It features 16 channels with four stereo outputs, two programmable channel groups and 24-bit internal processing. You also get pitch control over all the samples independently as well as control over amplitude. All the controls are on the front panel, which looks very professional, and everything is clearly marked. It can import all WAV files, but it also has MIDI support, so we'll have to wait for a future release.

The ability to save your settings as a preset bank really works well, so you can exchange or send files over the network. So far the DR005 is compatible with Cubase VST 3.7 or higher, Logic 4.2 or higher and any other VST 2.0 instrument-compatible host. This is by far the best drumsampler plug-in we've seen, and for the price – \$60 – you can't go wrong. It's available on-line from www.fxpansion.com

Free reverb

Freeverb is a completely free high-quality digital reverb plug-in that produces some very professional-sounding results. You don't get much control over the reverb – just room size, damping and mix – but it sounds great. It has a very '80s feel to it, very bright and sizzly, and if George Michael would love it, it may be simple, but the best stereo reverb are, and I've used it a lot since it arrived. Definitely add it to your collection. It's on this month's cover CD, or you can download it free from: www.dreampoint.co.uk

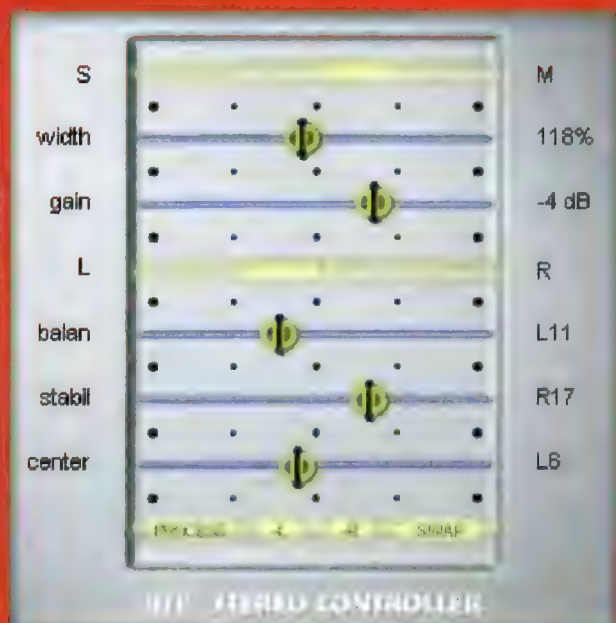
PSP Stereo Pack

Last month we brought you the freeware version of PSP's Stereo Pack on our cover CD. This month we're looking at the full-feature version. This collection of useful stereo plug-ins can enhance the stereo content of your material. Also included is a stereo enhancer for tracking stereo content and solving any phase problem.

The pack is made up of five separate plug-ins: The Stereo



There's now a fully-featured version of FXpansion's drum sampler – meet DR005



PSP Stereo Pack: a useful collection of stereo plug-ins that'll help you get your mixes sounding wider than ever

Enhancer works in much the same way as a Vitalizer. It expands the stereo image, making your mixes sound wider. This works well, but don't overdo it. It's easy to get too accustomed to this kind of effect. Pseudo Stereo makes mono sounds appear to be stereo. This is useful for older recordings, but it's not the only way to create stereo. The comb filter is a useful tool for creating stereo. The comb filter is a useful tool for creating stereo. The comb filter is a useful tool for creating stereo.

The Stereo Controller is a useful tool for creating stereo. It's a useful tool for creating stereo. It's a useful tool for creating stereo. It's a useful tool for creating stereo. It's a useful tool for creating stereo.

The Stereo Controller is a useful tool for creating stereo. It's a useful tool for creating stereo. It's a useful tool for creating stereo. It's a useful tool for creating stereo. It's a useful tool for creating stereo.

One last thing

PSP, the people

responsible for

the Stereo Pack,

are really useful.

They could probably

be useful in a

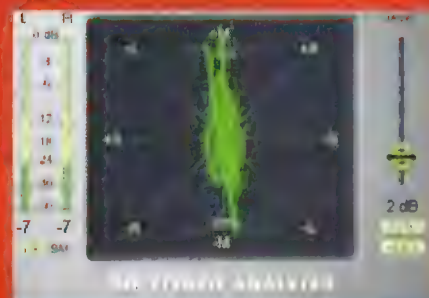
kind... a VST

plug-in game. It

could be for

you. It's on this

month's cover CD.



Check stereo content, positioning and phase problems with PSP's Stereo Analyser

HDR24/96. MACKIE'S NEW 24 TRACK RECORDER. WORKS WITH ANY MIXER. NO EXTRA COMPUTER OR SOFTWARE NEEDED.



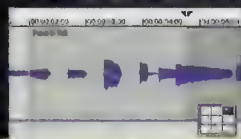
- 24 tracks...24-bits
- Built-in full-feature digital workstation editing
- Affordable pull-out media
- Built-in SVGA, mouse & keyboard ports
- Built-in 100BaseT Ethernet

New hard disk recorders were all over the place at this fall's AES convention. Our new HDR24/96 was the only recorder with built-in nondestructive graphic waveform editing. Just plug in a mouse, keyboard and SVGA monitor to view all recorder parameters on screen in real time. Enjoy complete editing control with unlimited levels of undo, drag-and-drop crossfades with 9 preset combinations plus fade/crossfade editor. And look forward to DSP time compression/expansion, pitch shift and lots more!

The HDR24/96 was the only recorder that uses pull out Ultra-DMA hard drives, so affordable that you can keep one for each project—over 90 minutes of 24-track recording time costs less than a reel of 2-inch tape!

Call or visit our website for preliminary info on the new HDR24/96. Shipping soon from Mackie Digital Systems.

HDR24/96 editing features include 8 takes per track with nondestructive comping, nondestructive cut/copy/paste of tracks, regions or super-regions, drag-and-drop fades & crossfades, 1x/2x/4x/8x/24x waveform views, true waveform editing with pencil tool, bidirectional cursor scrub and unlimited locators and loops...



with unlimited undos — but without requiring an external computer! Coming soon: DSP time compression/expansion, invert, pitch shift, normalize and much, much more.

Use the HDR24/96 with any analog or digital mixer...or link it up to our Digital 8 • Bus desk.

- Built-in 20-gig Ultra-DMA hard disk plus front panel bay for additional easily available pullout drives
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- Unlimited HDR24/96 linking! Sync 48, 72, 96, 128 or more tracks sample accurately
- 96kHz recording via software & new PDI • 96 I/O
- Uses Digital 8 • Bus I/O cards — mix and match!
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- Fast Ethernet port built-in
- Remotes available.



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Romford Tel: 020 8598 9955

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Glasgow Tel: 0141 204 0322

Leeds Tel: 0113 242 6601

Manchester Tel: 0161 877 6494

Newcastle Tel: 0191 232 4175

Sheffield Tel: 0114 221 3007

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Serious processing

The Mix tries out TC Electronic's new System 6000 multi-channel processing platform

The recent launch of TC Electronic's System 6000 at this year's Frankfurt Music Messe brings the reality of 5.1 processing a step closer and shows how seriously manufacturers are taking the format. This month, *The Mix*'s Jon Musgrave and Oz Owen went along to get a 'hands-on' look at the unit.

The System 6000 is a mainframe design, which combines with a remote controller unit called the 'Icon' and a separate 1U communication module. The Icon is a rather funky-looking unit with six motorised faders and a touch-sensitive screen.

Serious processing power comes in the form of four discrete multichannel engines, which can be cascaded, split or combined in a number of ways. Each engine has eight software-routable ins and outs patchable to the available physical inputs and outputs on the mainframe.

As far as audio connections are concerned, the 6000 mainframe carries eight 24-bit digital ins and outs with a word clock input, and can house up to three stereo 24-Bit 96kHz ADA converter cards.

Various software packages are available for the System 6000. Included in the standard package is the VSS 5.1 surround reverb processor. This allows up to four discrete inputs to be individually placed in the sound spectrum. Each of these sound sources then creates early reflections and reverb characteristics specific to their position. Also part of the standard software



are over 100 of the most popular presets from the M5000.

Additional software packages come in the form of the MD 3 and the MD 5.1, offering stereo/mono and multi-channel dynamics processing respectively. So, with the MD 5.1 package installed, true 6-channel 'Finalizing' will be a reality. Configurable sidechaining, including the option for an external sidechain, make the dynamics facilities very powerful.

Price: basic system from £6,462

More from: TC Electronic

Tel: 0800 917 8926

Web: www.tcelectronic.com

Unsigned/Unsealed 2000 gets heavy

The Unsigned/Unsealed new band competition has, in its second year, finally been bolstered by some music industry heavyweights. Unsigned/Unsealed 2000, which is arranged by music publishers and labels and offers acts an opportunity to get heard by an A&R audience, has been given the full seal of approval by bosses at both Warner Chappell and EMI Music Publishing.

Groups are invited to send in three tracks - plus bio and photo - to their nearest musical instrument or printed music shop. Every entry submitted (over 3000 entries are expected) will, it's claimed, be heard by the Unsigned/Unsealed A&R panel.

The 16 unsigned bands that the panel judge to be the most promising will then be invited to perform live at the Unsigned/Unsealed Week at London's Borderline from Monday Sept 4th. The winning act will receive studio time worth £2,000 plus instruments supplied by sponsors Fender, Roland and Seagull.

CDIY.com are posting up-to-the-minute details of Unsigned/Unsealed... on their website, including the names of the 60 bands who will be shortlisted along with downloadable tracks. Closing date for entries is 7th July.

More from: www.CDIY.com

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Every day, more than 230 HHB CD Recorders are converting existing analog material to CD in over 20 CBC broadcast facilities across Canada.

Pictured: CBC Senior Archives Technician Don Davies.

ON THE ROAD..

Life on the road can be tough, so only one CD Recorder makes the trip with the TEC Award winning Record Plant Remote: The HHB CDR850.

Pictured: Record Plant Remote Owner and TEC Award winning Remote Recording Engineer Kooster McAllister.



IN THE STUDIO..

London's Town House Studios is home to some of the most memorable hit records to come out of the UK. It's also home to 7 HHB CD Recorders.

Pictured: Virgin Studios Director Ian Davidson.



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The Rode to bullet-proof recordings?

Aussie mic manufacturers Rode have already made sizeable inroads into the UK market with their low-cost condenser microphones, the NT1 and NT2. And now for something completely different? Not quite, for now there's another – the sequentially-monikered NT3.

With its hypercardioid pick-up pattern, full frequency response and high immunity to RF interference, the NT3 is ideal for a broad range of instrument and vocal applications. Like all Rode mics, this 'silver bullet' is lovingly crafted, with heavy-duty, cast satin nickel body and high-strength, welded and heat-treated mesh head and internal shock-mounting. Though suitably well-equipped for the rigours of the road, we wouldn't recommend chucking it about the joint, Rod Stewart 'Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?'-stylee.

Price: £199

More from: HHB

Communications

Tel: 020 8962 5000

Web: www.hhb.co.uk



The show must go on

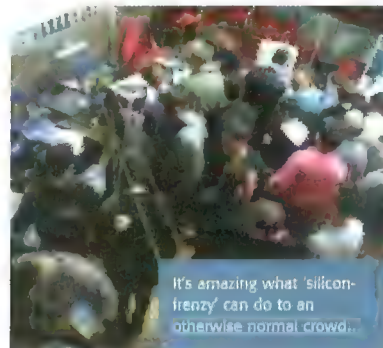
It's almost time for Turnkey's 'hands on' Computer Music Exhibition 3, now in its third year. This year's event promises to be bigger, madder and crazier than ever before, though last year's is going to take some beating – 400 people attending two evenings of seminars, followed by over 700 people squeezing into Turnkey's Media Tools upper rooms, fighting for the attention of 17 exhibitors! The words 'tight' and 'fit' certainly spring to mind – and, no, we're not discussing the production merits of 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight' here...

Turnkey will be running two separate seminar programmes on each of the four consecutive evenings leading up to the show on Saturday, 1 July. Confirmed exhibitors include Creamware, Digidesign, DUY, Emagic, E-mu Ensoniq, Koblo, Korg, Mark Of The Unicorn, Roland/Edirol, Steinberg, Yamaha and Waves – anyone who's anyone in the computer music world, basically.

More from: Turnkey

Tel: 020 7419 9999

Web: www.turnkey.com



It's amazing what 'silicon-frenzy' can do to an otherwise normal crowd.

Tripping the light fantastic

On a different note – or even in a different light – is the PLASA Show, the world's largest entertainment and leisure event. Now in its 24th year, PLASA Show 2000 will run from 10-13 September at Earls Court, London. With

over 400 exhibitors and over 14,000 visitors expected, this event looks to be a biggie.

More from: Clarion Events

Tel: 020 7370 8233

Web: www.plasa.org

The whole guitar world in your hand...

Wanna sound like Eddie Van Halen? Or Dave Gilmour? Are you a true 'Trekkie' fan of late-'60s vintage *Star Trek*, perhaps? Maybe you just wannabe yourself.

While bearing an uncanny resemblance to Spock's Tricorder – which, it has to be said, is one *helluva* device – might like to check out the low-cost RP100 Modeling Guitar Processor from Digitech, whatever their fretboard persuasion.

The RP100 combines the versatility of a room full of vintage and modern amp models with 26 fully-featured, studio-quality effects – up to 10 at once. Each effect has up to three adjustable parameters controlled directly from the three controls on the front panel. So no problems editing there, then.

Digitech thoughtfully ship the RP100 with 40 factory presets to get you started, with 40 user locations available for those wild and wacky creations you're bound to

come up with sooner or later.

A handy bonus feature is the RP100's Rhythm trainer, a great tool for improving timing, rehearsing different musical styles, or simply jamming by playing along to infinitely looped, user selectable sampled drum beats to suit.

Also useful is the built-in chromatic tuner, with four different tuning references – handy for perfecting those far out Far Eastern scales.

Connections to and from the outside world are via jacks. The stereo output is capable of driving headphones, or connecting to an amplifier. Real-time parameter access control is possible by connecting an expression pedal.

Sounds good? 'You might as well jump...'

Price: £100

More from: Arbiter Group

Tel: 020 8970 1909

Web: www.arbitergroup.com

A portable guitar effects processor that fits in the palm of your hand? That's the Digitech RP100...



Improve your communication

Canford release new condenser mic and a whole load of accessories

Canford Audio – the bods that make all those useful recording accessories – have launched a low-cost, phantom-powered studio condenser microphone. The CSM41, features a 1" gold sputtered diaphragm; a cardioid pick-up pattern; balanced transformer output and a machined brass enclosure, plus an internally mounted bass cut switch for correction of close-miked sources. Quoted frequency response is 30Hz to 20kHz.

Canford's optional pop shield prevents those vocal proximity problems. Two fine mesh screens are supported by a circular moulding attached to a gooseneck stem – which certainly beats a pair of old tights stretched over a wire coathanger! Smells a lot nicer, too...

Complementing the CM41 are a range of Canford products filling every common mic need, comprising of battery- and mains-powered 48V units, a phantom and AB(T) unit, and a Phantom to T-Power Converter – useful little tools all.

Also new is the Pro-Interface MkII, a portable, bi-directional stereo interface for matching semi-pro or domestic equipment – cassette machines and the like – to professional audio levels.

Of similar ilk are a MIDI Mains Switcher – enabling users to switch power on and off using the magic of

MIDI – and a MIDI Distribution Amplifier, which feeds MIDI data simultaneously to 12 other devices, thus avoiding signal delays and distortion that can otherwise occur. Like we said, handy stuff.

More from: Canford Audio
Tel: 0191 417 0057
Web: www.canford.co.uk



in brief

MP3.com rules OK?

A US federal court has ruled that MP3.com violated copyright law with the creation of a database in which users can store music and then access it via any net-connected computer. The crux of the legal issue was whether MP3.com (www.mp3.com) violated copyright law with the creation of the database, even though the service cannot work unless the user owns an original copy of the copyrighted work. Complicated, innit?

University recording challenge

Professional and Community Education (PACE) at Goldsmiths College, University of London, have re-launched their Music Technology programme in collaboration with Big Box Production Studios. Courses will run from on Saturdays from October 2000 onwards, ranging in length from eight to 30 weeks.

More from: Goldsmiths

Tel: 020 7919 7971

Web:

www.goldsmiths.ac.uk

Computer Music

Issue 22 of *Computer Music* is a bit of a control special, the centrepiece of which is a complete guide to Yamaha's XG standard. Elsewhere, they show you how to create complex synths using Reaktor – a plug-in instrument that's on the CD-ROM. Speaking of free software, this month also sees CM's best ever sequencer giveaway: a complete copy of Cubasis AV for PC.



Recording in progress

The Herbaliser are working on their 4th album in Jake Wherry's own Traintrax Studio

Karen Ramirez is mixing tracks at Eden Studios with Dave Bascombe

Robbie Williams is holed up in Battery Studios working on new stuff with Steve Power

Those Honeyz are back in the studio, recording tracks at Britannia Row with Best Kept Secret in the production chair

Coldcut are working on audio and visuals for their fifth album

13:13 are currently at Rockfield doing album tracks with Steve Osborne at the controls. Adrian Sherwood is busy remixing Death in Vegas

Placebo are getting a new album together at Olympic with Paul Corkett

Paul and Dave McCracken are currently doing a bit of prepping for a new album

Stephen Street is working at Townhouse with the Mamas

Hear No Evil's Steve Parr is up to his elbows in it working on 5.1 mixes

The Roots are getting their next album together with Simon Hanhart at Loco Studios

We are recording at Britannia Row with James Loughrey as engineer

Battery Studios plays host to the new albums who are mixing in studio 4 with Mick Lister





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Digital Performer's effects automation?

1. Beat/tempo-based automation

Automate plug-in effects in perfect time with your music, from filter sweeps that land on downbeats to multitap delays that echo in triplet 8ths. Your beat-based effects always stay in rhythm, even through meter and tempo changes. You'll never waste time wondering things like, "how many milliseconds is a 16th note at 126 bpm, anyway?" Rhythmic effects are now just a few clicks away.

2. Sample-accurate ramp automation

Digital Performer's plug-in automation isn't a kludge — it calculates true ramps in 32-bit floating point glory. And it's sample-accurate, not quantized to buffer boundaries, so you'll never hear weird artifacts or zipper noise in your audio. Instead, your moves will be as smooth as silk...

3. Discrete events and stair-step automation

Some effect changes are discrete events, like changing an LFO from a sine wave to a square wave. Others require a stair-step approach. Digital Performer has all three: ramps, events and steps.

4. Graphic editing

View all automation data directly on the audio waveform. Work fast with descriptive icons and convenient control points.

5. View all automation data at one time

Clearly view all automation data at one time. Easily control the interaction of multiple FX parameters.

6. Units of measurement that actually make sense

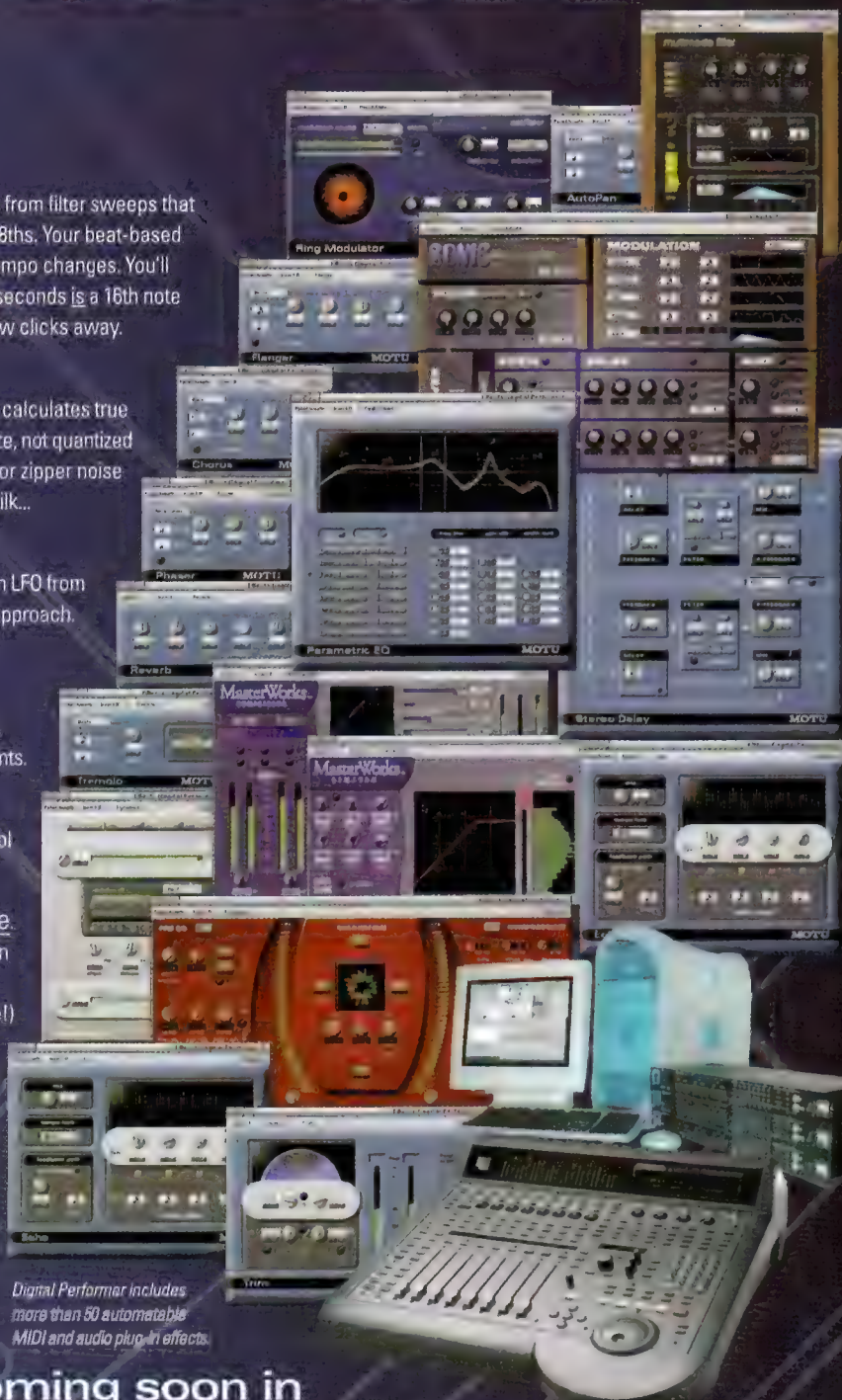
Digital Performer's automation data is always displayed in the correct unit (like milliseconds or percent), instead of arbitrary number ranges like other programs. (0-127, yipee!)

7. Five advanced automation modes

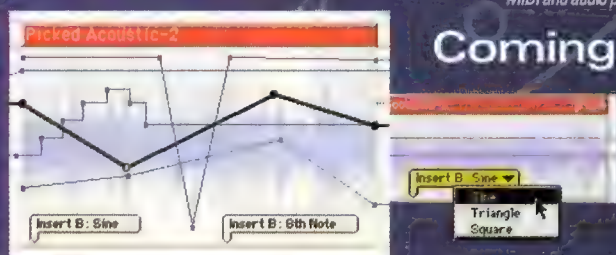
Tweak your heart out with advanced automation modes like Touch, Latch, Overwrite, Trim Touch and Trim Latch. Want to bypass the effect? You can automate that, too.

8. Mackie™ HUI™ support

Tweak FX parameters in real time with real knobs. Record your moves. Feel the power.



Digital Performer includes
more than 50 automatable
MIDI and audio plug-in effects.



Coming soon in

Digital Performer

musictrack

PC News

by Adam Fuest

Clock this

News on the PC front is particularly interesting at the moment. As some of you may have already seen, the first of the 1GHz machines are beginning to make their way onto the market. AMD's Athlon processors are already out and Intel's 1GHz units are imminent. AMD have been winning the speed stakes for the last six months (and the performance is certainly impressive) but music software manufacturers seem reluctant to endorse the Athlon, so a large question mark is left hanging over this chip for music applications. So far I know of only one professional using an Athlon-based machine and he is one of *The Mix's* own contributors...

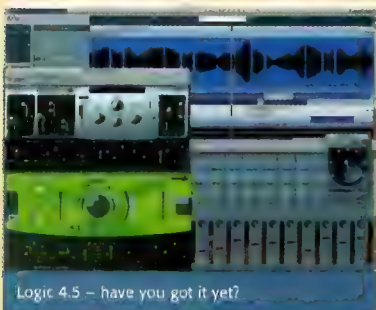
What this does of course mean, is that, as per usual, when a new clock speed appears, prices fall respectively down the chain. There are some serious sub 1GHz machines out there and you can pick up a bargain 866/850/800 MHz machine that will be easily upgradeable. What you will need to look out for is ISA slots, if you need them, because they are becoming thin on the ground. Some motherboards are now coming with a couple of 64-bit PCI slots and if you are looking to future-proof your investment, a couple of these will no doubt come in handy at a later date.

Winning with Windows

For those of you with a strong constitution and a familiarity with Windows, check out a little program called '98lite Professional/Standard' from <http://98lite.net>. This little beauty can be installed and will strip out most of the sloppy bits of Windows 98, including Explorer. Your desktop is not very attractive when it has finished its tasks, looking rather like Windows 95, but what you will have is a very lean and mean version of Windows running that uses far less of your precious resources.

While we are on the subject of OS, this month saw the emergence of BeOs as the operating system behind one of the first 'Internet Fridges'. This is obviously very cool, because once the

fridge is set to receive MTC, it will be able to tell you exactly how many beers you need to finish a song recorded at 130 bpm and dial up the local supermarket and sort you out! Simple, just the sort of thing one of the world's most nimble OS' should be doing.



Logic 4.5 - have you got it yet?

New warez

Software updates are coming thick and fast at the moment. Soundscape have released version 3.01 for both REd and SSHDR+ along with the implementation of surround-sound panning and total automation of all mixer parameters, and complete remote control from any suitable MIDI control or digital desk capable of outputting MIDI controllers. And by the time you read this, the free Logic 4.5 upgrade should be available, along with Sound Diver 3.0, both of which feature major enhancements.

Mark Of The Unicorn have released the 2408 Mk. 2. The spec on the 2408 has been upped with the inclusion of 24-bit converters and balanced TRS jacks. It's 100% compatible with the other MOTU expanders and the Core 32 card.

Mac News

by Lewis Bunney

Word from across the pond

Apple's announcement that Apple will be releasing a new version of Mac OS X (which will be the first of a new line of operating systems) has caused a lot of excitement in the music software world. The new version of Mac OS X is expected to be released in January 2001. However, Apple CEO Steve Jobs has said that the company will not be releasing the new version of Mac OS X until it is ready to support the new version of the Mac OS X hardware. This means that the new version of Mac OS X will not be available until the new hardware is released. This is a significant delay, but it is a necessary one. Apple needs to ensure that the new version of Mac OS X is ready to support the new hardware. This will ensure that the new version of Mac OS X is ready to support the new hardware. This will ensure that the new version of Mac OS X is ready to support the new hardware.



Jobs promises fun times ahead for Mac audio

The new version of Mac OS X is expected to be released in January 2001. However, Apple CEO Steve Jobs has said that the company will not be releasing the new version of Mac OS X until it is ready to support the new version of the Mac OS X hardware. This means that the new version of Mac OS X will not be available until the new hardware is released. This is a significant delay, but it is a necessary one. Apple needs to ensure that the new version of Mac OS X is ready to support the new hardware. This will ensure that the new version of Mac OS X is ready to support the new hardware. This will ensure that the new version of Mac OS X is ready to support the new hardware.

Midiman latest

New audio products are now available for the Mac OS X. The Midiman 4x4 multi-port interface for USB-equipped Macs is now available. This interface will allow you to connect up to four USB audio devices to your Mac. This is a significant improvement over the current situation where you can only connect one USB audio device to your Mac. The Midiman 4x4 interface is available for \$199 for the 4x4 and \$299 for the 8x8. The Midiman 4x4 interface is available for \$199 for the 4x4 and \$299 for the 8x8. The Midiman 4x4 interface is available for \$199 for the 4x4 and \$299 for the 8x8.

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sound bites

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Pro sound or no sound? As recording technology becomes ever cheaper and easier to use, is there still a place for pro sound engineers and studios? Or is the art of recording becoming deskilled?

Online A&R

Are MP3/unsigned band websites fast becoming the 'noughties' equivalent of piles of unlistened-to demos under an A&R man's desk?

Un-charted territory?

Were the charts always this bad, or has the UK music scene sunk to new lows? Discuss.

Write to us:

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Re-re-cycle

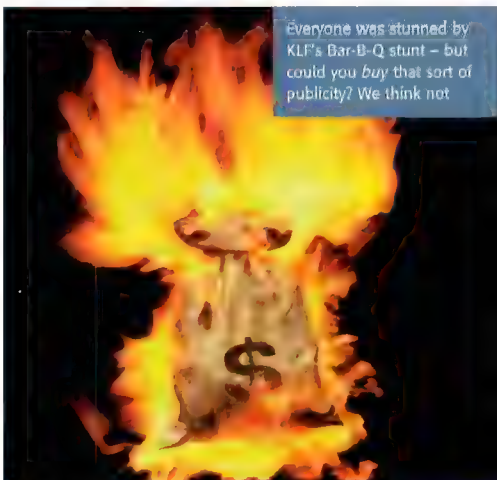
Has anybody noticed that the KLF/Orb used the same ideas as the Dr Calculus *Designer Beatnik* album (1986, Virgin Ten Records): the sounds of trains; the girl talking over music; the ambient reggae number; the non-stop blending tracks; the 3-D panning effects; the speech samples? Dr Patterson was even photographed wearing the same floppy-eared hat and glasses as Dr Calculus (*I.D.* magazine, 1986). Check out the writing on the vinyl *Designer Beatnik* album sleeves - this was 1986!

I Know What They Did That Summer, Birmingham

I'm not surprised. The KLF were all about stealing from the past, and they were proud of it. Remember the Abba rip-off stuff, or even 'Build a Fire' off The White Room - an obvious sample from the Twin Peaks soundtrack? They never tried to hide it. One of their explanations of their name was that it stood for 'The Communications Liberation Front': i.e. they nick stuff from records and make it their own.

Anyone crazy enough to burn a million quid is easily capable of ripping off an entire image, and fair play to them. I wouldn't want to think anyone sane would create stadium house music wearing a KKK shoal and a rhino horn.

Sean Vincent



Everyone was stunned by KLF's Bar-B-Q stunt - but could you buy that sort of publicity? We think not

USB fix

With reference to Mike Collins' *Industry News* column in the June issue of *The Mix*, I would like to point out there is now a fix to the USB problem detailed by Mike.

Mike's description of the problem was 100% accurate. The new MOTU USB driver is contained within FreeMIDI 1.44, which is available for download from MOTU's website at www.motu.com/downloads.

Just one other point related to Mike's article: Digital Performer, MOTU's flagship sequencer, did away with floppy disk authorisation almost 12 months ago and introduced a simple Keycode authorisation, which works on all Macs. No need for a floppy drive or an ADB port to plug in a dongle.

Mark Gordon, Musictrack

All those interested in 'the alternative sequencer' should check out our review of the latest version of Digital Performer, starting on page 47.

Northern light

I was very surprised not to see in your otherwise excellent filter selection in issue 75 the free VST plug-in N-pole. The N-pole (North Pole) is a low-pass/band-pass filter with an extra distortion and a delay unit. It has its own little sound that is very useful on vocals. It is not all that stable during editing the settings, but for the money (£0) it works wonders.

Danny, Belgium

For those who aren't already wise to the N-Pole, it's on this month's cover CD. Try it out - like the man says, it's free...

And finally

In response to Barry's *Letter of the Month* in issue 76 (please, call me Alex - I think we know each other well enough by now), I'd like to say that I believe his problem is one of presentation. He has a point to make but is letting himself down when it comes to making it. That's why I find it particularly ironic that he accuses me of straying from the point.

Rather than sticking to his comments about quality and his pedantic distinctions between music and songs (which I, having very broad-ranging tastes in music, feel no need to make), he continues to insist on making



gratuitous comments like "The Prodigy and Chemical Brothers are... close to being irrelevant", which do nothing to further his arguments, but which simply illustrate his prejudice towards electronic music.

I maintain that people will still be at least trying to hum the opening bars of 'Firestarter' in ten years time ("weeyaaaaaarr-weyeeeeee" etc.) and those not brave enough to try will shake their heads shouting "I'm a Firestarter..." in gleeful recollection. I feel I can say this with some authority, as it's nearly ten years since the Prodigy first emerged, and everyone I know remembers 'Out Of Space' ("I'll take your brain to another dimension...")

Oh well, it's Barry's loss. I suppose I should count myself lucky - I just get on with making music/songs I enjoy, without lamenting the state and nature of the industry.

Alex Williams, by email

Any other readers care to join this debate? Go on, the more the merrier...

letter of the month



No future?

Some things in life just don't add up. Having recently gained a place on the Studio Assistants course at Alchemea College of Audio Engineering, I am looking forward to a profitable life in the music industry as a sound engineer. However, I have also been reading (with great interest) your articles on internet music and the new MP3 format. You say that soon (through the communications revolution that is the internet) people will be able to record, mix and distribute their music from home, bypassing expensive studio costs and record label A&R departments.

If recording and selling music like this becomes commonplace then where does this leave budding sound engineers such as myself? Commercial studios will no longer exist, as they will not be financially viable (except for the biggest artists) and the number of people employed in recording music professionally will drop dramatically, lowering job prospects. Is what we are seeing a revolution, or a descent into the de-skilling of the art of recording? What I fear is that on the day of completing my diploma I will walk out of the door with a qualification for a job that no one wants to pay me to do. Please tell me that this is but a terrible nightmare! If not then join me, brothers, in my quest to destroy MP3 forever!

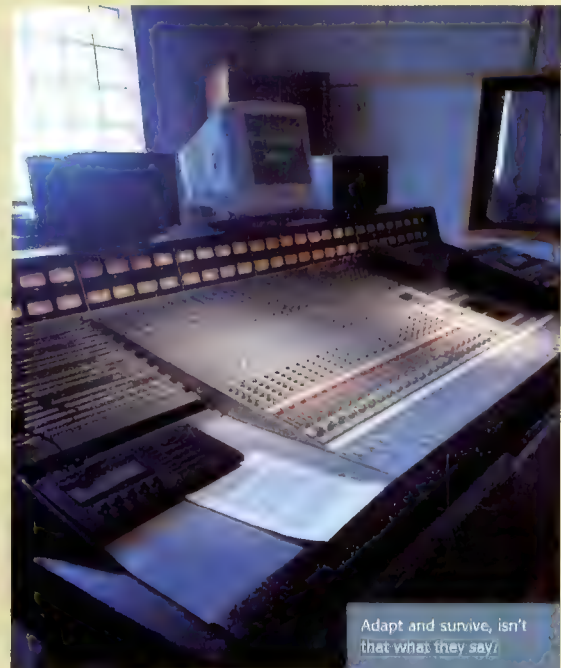
Nick Barron, by email

If there's one thing you can count on, it's the fact that the music biz is very changeable. We've witnessed a recording revolution over the past 15 years and now we are poised to see one in distribution, thanks to the internet. Along with that, the roles of individuals within the industry have inevitably changed and will continue to change.

But it doesn't necessarily follow that there is less opportunity. The recording revolution hasn't made the sound engineer extinct, (although the role/importance of big-bucks commercial studios has changed), sampling hasn't made the musician extinct, nor do I believe MP3 will destroy record companies or the A&R process. The exact form all of these functions take will continue to evolve, but surely their foundations will remain the same: sound engineers will continue to be the medium through which artists can create and capture their recorded sound, and A&R people will continue to select and promote artists.

Of course some individuals will fall by the wayside - as always, it will be the ones that cling to old methods and ideas, and refuse to embrace new technology (like the sound engineers of the '80s who refused to see the potential of sequencing and computer-based recording). It sounds like you have a fixed notion of what a 'sound engineer' does and where he/she works (i.e. in a big studio). Lose it - otherwise you will be left standing while others will grasp the opportunities where they come.

Andrea Robinson



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Who tests the gear

Our team of equipment reviewers are all audio industry professionals, experts in their chosen fields – engineers, producers, remixers, musicians and software specialists. This means that you can trust the opinions expressed in our reviews.

How the gear is tested

Wherever possible, the gear we test is used in actual sessions. Indeed, some of the biggest-selling records this year will have acted as testbeds for our reviewers. We believe that to truly evaluate kit properly, it needs to be tested in studio conditions – not a dark room!

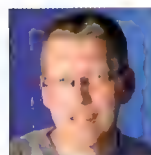
Impartiality

Reviews in **THE MIX** are in no way biased towards certain manufacturers. We will deliver an impartial verdict on a product whether or not a manufacturer advertises in this magazine. Our first duty is to you, the reader, and our goal is to give you the best possible advice on buying equipment. We will not hesitate to expose sub-standard equipment.



Products that are judged to be outstanding by our reviewers are awarded the 'Editor's Choice' tag. In a standard review, this means that the product offers exceptional performance for the price it retails for. In group tests, there may be two awards – 'Best Performance' and 'Best Value'. The 'Best Performance' award will go to the product that offers the best performance irrespective of price, while the 'Best Value' award will go to the product that offers the best price/performance ratio.

The Mix reviews team



Alan Branch

Producer/engineer/remixer and part of London's famed On-U-Sound production team, Alan's recent credits include Primal Scream's *Extremator* album and a heavy-duty remix for Trent Reznor's *Nine Inch Nails*.



Adam Crute

'Mac fan' Adam manages *The Mix*'s in-house recording studio and masters our cover CD every month. He refuses to let the US Justice Department's decision to split Microsoft in half divide his platform loyalties.



Trevor Curwen

Engineer/producer Trev was the mixmeister behind Portishead's seminal *Portishead* album, no less. Never one for resting on his northern laurels, he's currently working with a Nashville-based singer/songwriter.



Steve Evans

A Bath-based freelance engineer, producer and songwriter, Steve learned his craft both on the road and in his own 16-track commercial studio. His most recent project was a remix of M's 'Pop Muzik'.



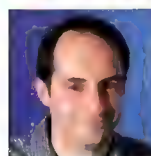
Adam Fuest

His production credentials take in film soundtracks and acts such as Drugstore and indie band Astrohound. Adam is based 2,500 feet up in the Brecon Beacons, where he runs his own Twin Peaks residential studio.



David Harrow

'Well-travelled' and 'busy' best describes producer/keyboard player David. As James Hardway, he's just finished recording a new drum 'n' bass album in Cuba and Jamaica; US TV appearances to follow. Nice.



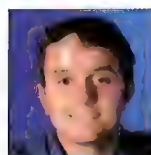
Jon Musgrave

A house engineer at London's Roundhouse studios, Jon's diverse credits include Culture Club, Beverly Knight and Mercury Rev. He recently engineered the Mike Spencer remix of Queen/Bowie's 'Under Pressure'.



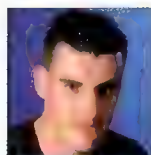
Tim Oliver

Tim began his career in 'Madchester' where he produced early demos for The Stone Roses. He went on to notch up credits with Gene, M-People, New Order, The Happy Mondays and, most currently, Indigo Girls.



Seb Pecchia

Former Real World house engineer Seb's been busy playing foreman on his new studio building site near Bath, spending a fortune on new gear and deciding which console to buy. He's just mastered Brower's debut single.



Sean Vincent

Such has been Sean's success since his tape-op days at Matrix studios that today he's considering setting up an independent label, as well as re-fitting his own studio. Mastering and editing helps kill any spare time.

reviews

This month Roland's VP-9000 brings 'Variphrase' to the masses and Drawmer's 1960 becomes the 1969. Plus, we test the Really Nice Compressor, new TDM plug-ins from Bomb Factory and TC Works, and analogue modelling from Korg...



Roland VP-9000 p26



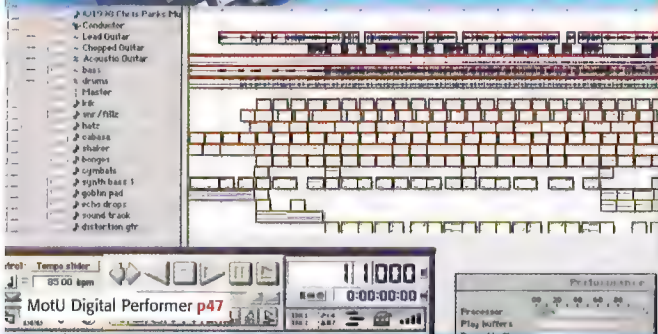
TC Works Voice Tools p54



Korg MS2000R p50



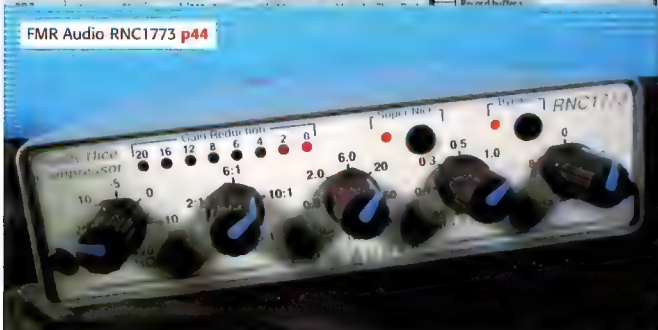
JBL LSR25P p40



Motu Digital Performer p47



Drawmer 1969 p32



FMR Audio RNC1773 p44



Bomb Factory p36



Roland VP-9000

Variphrase processor

Price £2,299

For New take on sampling that breaks all the rules ➤ Excellent effects

➤ Zip storage as standard

Against Limited to six parts ➤ Max time for one sample is 25secs stereo/50secs mono

Verdict A genuine first for Roland – no-one else has anything like this.

The future of sampling starts here

Since sampling was brought to the masses way back in the '80s, musicians have used and abused the technology to create some of the most amazing tracks we've ever heard. But although most modern samplers are capable of a great many clever functions, the majority of us only ever use them for playing loops. And one of the most annoying traits of using a sampler in this way is that you can't change tempo midway into a track without re-pitching all your loops.

Another oft-under-used function is time-stretching. We've all used it to get a loop to fit both the timing and the pitch of a track, but it's always been a hit and miss affair, largely due to the fact that it doesn't work in real-time. Then there's multi-sampling: a very tiring way of making sure your samples sound realistic across the keyboard. Yes indeed, for all its benefits, traditional sampling can be a real pain in the backside.

Well, search no more for a solution, as Roland have just given us the answer to these problems in the shape of the VP-9000. Not only can it adjust time and pitch independently in real-time, but it can also change the formant of a vocal or instrument sample. Changing the groove of a drum loop is another possibility, by changing the quantisation – again in real-time.

Because it uses formant-shifting, the VP-9000 automatically maps instruments across the keyboard, without making them sound all 'Mickey Mouse'. And the best bit about all this extra control is that everything can be recorded via MIDI into a sequencer. So, create beats and textures that move like never before, capture the performance, then edit to fit, if necessary.

This ability to make samples 'elastic' gives the user immense power to radically change samples – be they

drum loops, instruments or vocals. Roland claim that the VP-9000 will find favour in various circles, but the most obvious candidates appear to be remixers and the dance fraternity. In fact, Jay Kay has just bought one and tells us the sound of the VP will be featuring heavily on the next Jamiroquai album! If the VP-9000 is all it's cracked up to be, it really could change the way a lot of us work – forever.

Overview

The VP-9000 resides within a 2U rack which has a big 240 x 64 dot backlit LCD screen right in the centre.

Below this are six 'F' or Function keys for selecting the various screen options. To the right of the screen are the cursor keys and a big 'value' dial, which also acts as a selection button if you push it. A nice touch is that when turning this value dial, you can simultaneously press it in for a quicker response.

On the far right are the three Variphrase controls – Pitch, Time and Formant/Groove. On the opposite side of the screen are the volume and record level controls, along with the audio input on balanced TRS jack and a headphone socket. Also located here are the main function keys, which select either performance or sample mode, as well as the utility and system keys. Just above these is the Zip drive used for all data storage and retrieval, although the VP-9000 is also equipped with two SCSI connectors.

The back panel has everything you might want in a sampler: three stereo pairs of outputs on balanced TRS jacks (or six mono outs), stereo inputs on balanced TRS jacks, and the usual MIDI in, out and thru. The audio input features a selectable gain range from -20dB to -10dB or +4dB.



CD info

tracks 08-10

Hear the ground-breaking processor do its thing to Jay Kay's vocals, followed by more real-time action

words **Sean Vincent** photography **Katherine Lane-Sims**



The digital interface comprises S/PDIF I/O on either optical or coaxial connectors, and, as mentioned earlier, the VP-9000 has two SCSI connectors – one 25-pin type; the other, a 50-pin type. Also included is a switchable SCSI terminator and a device number selection switch – nice touch. It goes without saying that power is supplied via the usual IEC mains lead.

On the top of the casing is a removable panel where memory is added to the VP, should you wish. It comes with 8Mb as standard, but this can be increased to 136Mb with the use of SIMMS. In its un-expanded state, the VP-9000 has a sample time of 50sec (mono) or 25sec (stereo), which can be expanded to 14min 10sec (mono) or 7min 5sec (stereo).

The eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed that there's less sampling time per Mb with the VP, and this is down to the encoding process. Basically, the price of 'elastication' is that encoded samples take 1.6 times more space than a normal sampler would use, but hey, for this kind of control, who's complaining?

One of the best features of the VP-9000 is the ability to import samples in so many different formats. It supports Roland S-700, Akai S1000-3000 (via SCSI), WAV, AIFF, as well as its very own 'VP' format.


The VP-9000 is capable of playing six mono or three stereo-encoded phrases at one time, and it's this 'encoding' process that gives the samples an elastic quality. There are three encoding types: Solo, for monophonic sources like vocals or woodwind (which

can still be played back polyphonically); Backing, for rhythmic sources like drum loops; and Ensemble, for ambient sounds like pads and strings. Only samples encoded in Solo mode can have their formant controlled via MIDI.

Due to the elastic properties bestowed upon encoded samples we can now adjust pitch, tempo and formant *independently* of each other – all in real-time. This means that when a vocal sample is assigned to a MIDI channel it can be played polyphonically from a keyboard. All the notes will be at the right pitches, *and* all the notes will still be the same length, virtually eliminating the need for multi-sampling.

Because this is all done with one encoded sample, you don't need to dedicate huge chunks of memory to it either. Roland also claim that you can sample various different loops, all having different tempos and in different keys, and the VP-9000 will sync them all up and put them in tune with one another. This will, no doubt, entice the remix crowd into taking a closer look.

Another great feature of the VP-9000 is Event Mapping, giving the user the opportunity to automatically divide a sample up into smaller ones, then use them to create new phrases or loops – much the same as ReCycle works. Using the Step-Playback mode you can trigger successive samples from the same key, each one firing with successive key strikes.

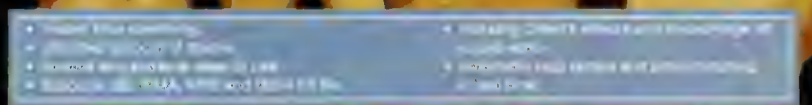
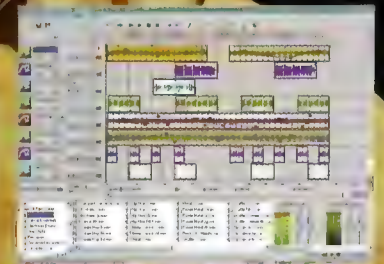
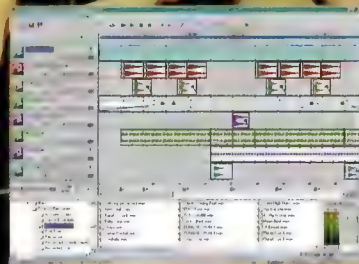
Phrase Mapping, on the other hand, allows you to map a group of phrases across the keyboard 

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MIX



EDIT



PLAY





» for 'jamming' and real-time manipulation, and the results can be re-sampled.

The VP features various playback modes for the samples. Retrig mode works like an ordinary sampler, where each time a key is struck the sample plays from the beginning. In Time-Sync mode you can play one sample from one key, then add a harmony with another key and the second sample will be automatically sync'd with the first. Legato mode allows you to play monophonically, without the sample triggering from the start each time.

As found on the Boss VT-1 and the VS8F-2 FX card, the VP-9000 features a Robot function that effectively takes away the pitch variations from a sample. Using this mode, it's possible to create a new melody by playing a little riff from a keyboard. Using vocal samples in this way means you don't have to be locked to one melody, even after it's been recorded.

Loading and saving data is via either the built-in Zip drive or an optional CD-R unit. The option of using a CD-R is advantageous, in that the media is so cheap, and you can backup much more than will fit on a Zip disk. However, the Zip is convenient for swapping files to and from a computer, especially as the VP-9000 can recognise WAV and AIFF.

Once a Zip is inserted, banks or folders can be loaded, which is very quick and convenient. You can't use the samples in an elastic way until they've been encoded, however. In the case of loops, this involves telling the VP what the BPM is, although there is a special screen to help you calculate this from the amount of measures/beats in the loop.

In use

On power-up the VP searches for installed Zip disks or SCSI devices. Once this is done, you are then confronted with the Performance page, which is very much like the multi-setup page on a synth. By using the Part selection arrows, you can select the various parts that are assigned to the six MIDI channels.

Loading a sample from disk involves selecting Load from the disk menu, then choosing the sample format you are about to load. Once this is done, the samples

can be loaded. If the samples are saved in a folder on a computer, the whole folder can be loaded at once, saving a lot of time.

Before a sample can be used it needs to be encoded. Once you've selected the encode type there's a delay while the VP goes about its business. Sometimes this takes a few seconds; sometimes longer. We found that the VP-9000 is very sensitive to source material that isn't entirely 'clean'. Using drum loops, pops or crackles can trip up the groove function, but, generally speaking, it works very well.

The next step is to calculate the BPM. If you don't already know what it is, simply skip to the Sampling Menu under Tempo, then count the number of measures or bars. The VP does the rest.

Attention to detail is paramount when trimming the samples, as the VP uses the length of the sample to determine the BPM. We spent a little while sorting this out, not taking into account a reverb tail at the end of the loop that extended the loop by about two beats. But once sorted, this presented no more problems.

We got the VP-9000 up and running alongside a software sequencer, using five loops and one solo sample. The five drum loops all started out with different tempos, and one of them had a bassline, too. It took a while to get the loops all running in sync, mainly due to our BPM miscalculations, but after setting up a couple it becomes second-nature.

So, with the beats all sorted, we tried changing tempo on the sequencer a number of times, causing the VP-9000 to shift the tempos of the loops correspondingly – without changing the pitch. And, yes, everything still matched perfectly! No arsing about with re-calculating tempos, or hit-and-miss time-stretching here; just change the tempo on the sequencer, and the encoded samples will be adjusted accordingly. This will save loads of time and give programmers much more flexibility when using loops.

The solo voice, encoded so that we could change the formant in real-time, worked a treat. Depending on the tone of the voice, the results vary. We found that the more natural tones like vocals, brass and woodwind responded best, although some

Effects

The VariPhrase Processor comes with 40 effect types, ranging from Roland's famous COSM guitar amp simulators to Rotary Speaker sims and Boss pedal emulators. The delay algorithms allow accurate tempo syncing, and the reverbs are based on Roland's own SRV-3030 24-bit reverb processor. The effects are arranged in three banks: Multi, Chorus and Reverb, and these can all be run simultaneously. These effects are of a very high standard, so much so, that in a lot of cases further external processing won't be needed.

Let's take a look at some of the more interesting effects included in the VP-9000. One of the best is the Humanizer. This adds a vowel character to sounds, giving similar properties to a human voice. Two vowels can be added to the sound, as well as overdrive. This will, no doubt, turn up on various dance tracks as it really works for lead lines.

Phonograph adds the noise and characteristics of a vinyl recording: simply select the rotation speed (33, 45 or good ol' 78 rpm), distortion, dust and number of scratches. This is becoming a popular effect and easily lives up to the quality of some of the plug-ins designed to do the same job.

Radio Tuning makes the sample sound as if you're listening to it on a slightly mis-tuned radio. A good effect, bound to be used by ambient fans.

Boss Flanger recreates the sound of the much-loved Boss flanger effects pedals. Variable depth, rate and resonance enable the sound to be tailored to suit.

Hexa Chorus is a lovely six-stage chorus effect. Combining a 2-band EQ – both pre- and post-chorus allows a great deal of flexibility. The ability to pan the six different chorus stages gives some cool results – great for beefing up organ sounds.





specifications

I/O Mic and line (XLR), aux & sidechain (1/4" jacks)

AUX SECTION

Bass EQ @ 40Hz
0 to 15dB

Treble EQ @ 16kHz
0 to 18dB

Gain up to 40dB

COMPRESSOR

Input selector Aux, line, mic, mic 48V

Switchable HPF
50Hz/100Hz

Threshold ± 30

Attack (switchable)
2ms to 50ms

Release (switchable)
400ms to 20sec

Output gain
-20/+20dB

So, on the posh side, we give it the big thumbs up. But are we losing anything? Well, the 1969's auxiliary input doesn't disappoint, providing the same chunky, usable input that the 1960 has – plus a little more presence, perhaps. All our observations have been about the refinements made to the 1969, but, far from wishing to appear misleading, let us reassure you that it can still bump and grind with the best of them!

Just squeeze that threshold a little, speed up the attack time, stretch the release time out a wee bit, switch in the standard stereo-link, and you're back to where you started with one very keen compressor.

On stereo drum ambience, the Big Link proved to be very useful in controlling the pumping cymbal effect one has to deal with when a particularly loud kick drum is being used, causing the compression to act adversely on the cymbals.

Verdict

In short, we really liked the 1969, and bearing in mind the nature of the tweaks and the improvements they have made to what is still a well-loved compressor, it's fairly good value for money. Admittedly, if you're just after a valve or hybrid compressor, there are now many to choose from – most of which are a little less expensive, but they don't have mic amps or the aux

input. The only comparable device that springs to mind in this respect is the TLA C1, which, although very similar in many ways, still has a very different character.

The new range of Behringer valve products also has much to offer, but not the same facilities in one box. If you were to have only one dynamics processor to work with, the Drawmer 1969 would provide most of what you would need – traditional or radical.

Incidentally, Mercenary Audio are a Boston-based company, and a quick visit to their website (www.mercenary.com) will get those with a penchant for old gear positively drooling. These guys not only design; they restore, sell and work with their gear, and they love it. Their enthusiasm for good sounds is clearly prevalent on this 1960 'reworking'.

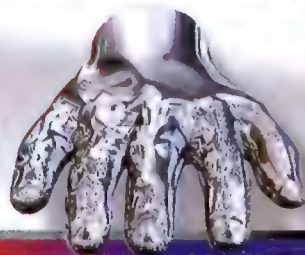
Others, given this opportunity, would have stuck their name all over it; put it in a case twice the size; welded on a plain steel frontage; thrown in load of vintage-style knobs, and charged another 1,500 quid. But, instead, we have the understated Drawmer 1969, costing little more and sounding great!

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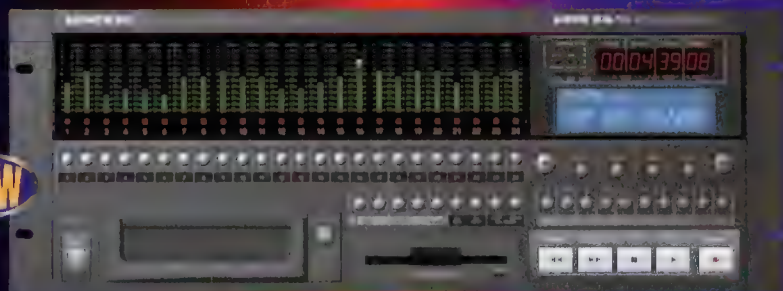
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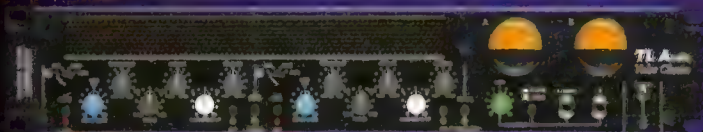
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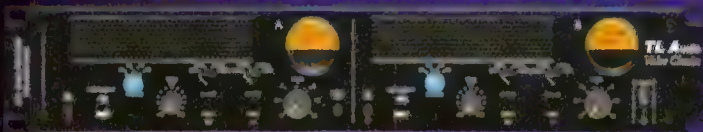
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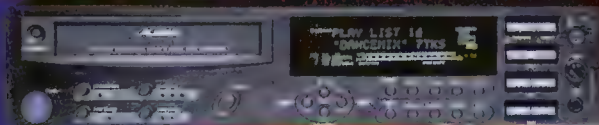
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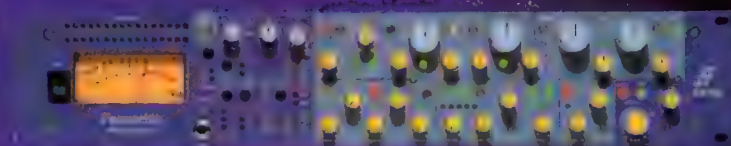
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For Makes classic compressors available as plug-ins ➤ Stereo link on Urei 1176 and LA-2A

➤ SansAmp offers a good alternative to AmpFarm

Against Expensive ➤ Tiring challenge/response installation protection

Verdict Excellent and original plug-ins – a 'must-have' for those with Pro Tools *and* deep pockets

words
Alan Branch

system requirements

- TDM/AudioSuite require Pro Tools 4.0 or later
- Real-Time AudioSuite requires Pro Tools 5.0 LE or later
- VST version in development

prices

- Classic Compressors £499
- SansAmpTM PSA-1 £449
- Moogerfooger Lowpass Filter and Ring Modulator £349
- Voce Spin and Chorus/Vibrato £349

Popular studio hardware is appearing in software plug-in form all over the place these days. And why not? Plug-ins are less costly and bulky than their hardware equivalents and the quality of results often justifies the change. And think of all the savings on cables, too!

Here we turn our attention to Bomb Factory's professional audio tools for Pro Tools users, the much talked about and admired plug-ins. Bomb Factory themselves label the bundles 'professional tools for Pro Tools, not just plug-ins'. A revealing statement.

Calling them 'emulations', they include versions of the classic Urei 1176 and LA-2A compressors, the Sansamp PSA-1 guitar amp simulator, an analogue Moogerfooger, designed by – yes, you guessed it – Bob Moog, and Voce Spin Chorus/Vibrato, a simulation of the classic Leslie speaker cabinet effect.

Three of the devices have been developed with their associated companies, but, seeing as the company that originally issued Urei is no longer around, the compressors have been home-grown by the Bomb Factory boys. Incidentally, new hardware versions of the original Urei are due onto the market – great news, as it's still one of the best vocal compressors around, but that's another story (see page 106).

Installation uses the online challenge/response system, issued with a key disk. You then authorise via the internet – supposedly instantly. This took ages, due

in no small part to making sure the wording was perfect, and included a company name on the plug-in registration. Of course, this is not the fault of Bomb Factory, but the rather the somewhat awkward design of this particular piracy protection.

Classic compressors

The Urei 1176 is perhaps one of the most common compressors found in studios around the world, and, with its characteristic soft knee compression, it's a great workhorse on day-to-day sessions. Now, for all you Pro Tools users that get a kick out of having everything inside the computer, this is as close as you might get to owning a real one. The Urei 1176 has been copied very well, from the authentically animated VU meter to the light reflection on the knobs – even the slightly uneven push buttons for the ratio settings are there.

To test all the plug-ins, we had the perfect session, having recently accepted the challenge to mix some tracks for a new Matt Bianco album with Pro Tools and a Pro Control. With some scepticism, we immediately slapped Bomb Factory's 1176 compressor all across the vocal, hoping to hear the warmth and fatness of the soft-knee compression. The results were amazing!

We tried loads of different settings – even the trick of pushing all the buttons in at once, as with the real-world Urei. It sounded and acted very much like an 1176, lifting the vocal in all the right places. All the controls – input and output gain, attack and release

Even better than the real thing? A virtual Urei 1176 compressor, with perfect stereo linking and sidechain input to boot





knobs, as well as the aforementioned ratio and meter selector buttons – worked and looked like the real thing. Even the metal texture to the black finish is the same, but what is different is now you get perfect stereo linking, and even a sidechain input!

Teletronix' LA-2A compressor is understandably viewed in reverential terms within studio circles, and, like the 1176, is favoured for its ease of use and great sound, even on audio with varied dynamics. Again, the finish looks complete, right down to the old brushed metal finish. Meters move nicely, and fatness and warmth is easily dialled in.

With just three knobs to play with, setting this compressor couldn't be easier, although there's always that extra switch for compression or limiting to ease those lonely nights! Not having a real LA-2A for comparison was not necessarily the end of the world – it performed admirably, imparting fatness, warmth and handling peaks without killing the dynamics. Driving bass through the limiter sounded rich and full – everything you might expect from such a classic compressor; up to a certain digital point.

Both compressors still seem to lack a certain analogue grittiness, but that might be overcritical, as in both cases they performed well, especially when you consider you can plug in as many as three per farm card chip, mono or stereo.

SansAmp PSA-1

The SansAmp PSA-1, co-developed with Tech 21, has 49 SansAmp presets, including amp settings of Marshall, Mesa Boogie and Fender to name a few, and four presets from Bomb Factory. With its eight knobs for adjusting tone, cabinet simulation and harmonic generation, it offers a large and powerful range of options, and not only for guitar and bass.

The SansAmp, like its studio hardware equivalent, does do its job very well, with plenty of control giving a powerful range of crunch and drive, combined with EQ,

but now with less noise. It's obvious from the first tweak how powerful some of the controls are, and turning up the preamp or drive can really make it take off. Its realistic tube sound is very good indeed – certainly different enough to warrant buying, even if you already have Line 6's popular AmpFarm plug-in.

Voce Spin & Voce Chorus/Vibrato

Here are two plug-ins with some classic effects, like the mighty Hammond organ and Leslie cabinets. The Voce Spin gives 'as real as you can get' rotating speaker simulation, including 15 presets. The only on-screen controls are as per a real chorale control, with switches for chorale, off and tremolo. These control the motor speed of the rotating speakers from slow to fast, while 'off' turns off the motors, unsurprisingly – but you still get the sound of the cabinet, wherever the speakers stopped, relative to their mic positions.

These controls do seem a little limited, but the idea is simple: choose a preset, then use the controls to speed up and down – just like a speaker cab

Like its classic hardware forefather, the LA-2A compressor plug-in is simple, but effective in use

CD info

track 01

Load up the demo and try out the Bomb Factory free for a couple of weeks

Spin that speaker – real as you can get' rotating speaker simulation with the Voce Spin plug-in





'Bob Moog goes digital', apparently, and this scarily realistic-looking little rogue sounds mighty fine.

⌘ with a real revolving speaker drum. With Pro Control you will be able to access further parameters of trim, tremolo, balance and mic positions – more Leslie cabinet adjustments, in other words.

The Chorus/Vibrato plug-in under scrutiny here is of the six-position switch variety, as fitted to many classic Hammonds. It does as it says, and, again, very authentic it is, too – gritty analogue chorus or tremolo that doesn't sound too synth-like, as is often the case in many digital chorus effects presets. There are, however, no extra parameters via Pro Control.

Both of these, like Bomb Factory's other plug-ins, work very well, with obvious R&D time spent labouring over achieving an authentic sound. There is limited control, but the theme that runs throughout all Bomb Factory plug-ins is to look and sound as close to the originals as possible – 'nuff said!

Amps-in-a-box... alright, in a plug-in, then! Take your pick from Marshall, Mesa Boogie, Fender and more.



Moogerfooger

The press release says, 'Bob Moog goes digital'. Which indeed appears to be the case. Ported over from an authentic analogue design, the Moogerfooger gives you two plug-ins; one called the Lowpass Filter; the other, a Ring Modulator.

The Lowpass Filter simulates a 2-pole/4-pole resonant filter with envelope follower, and we used this to add analogue resonance to a few instruments. It really adds a bit of an authentic sound to flat-sounding samples, and even comes fitted with flashing LEDs showing the LFO pulse.

The Ring Modulator, like the Lowpass Filter, comes with the look of an effect pedal, coming with control LFO and Modulation sections combined with a drive control. The LFO section gives a sine/square waveform switch, a rate and an amount control knob, while the Modulator section has a Hi-Lo switch, Frequency and Mix control knob.

Both plug-ins achieve analogue-type synth texture effects with ease. Bob Moog is probably pleased, as it does live up to the name, but there are other, similar plug-ins that are quite a bit more comprehensive with their controls – but, again, that is part of the sound design and look. It's certainly a nice added extra when layering sounds or effects on audio in need of a bit of an analogue twist.

Verdict

Using plug-ins based on well-known hardware has become quite a trend, and looks set to continue. But it does make you wonder – when very good plug-ins are being sold for less money – how much you're paying for this name branding. They will always be an emulation of hardware, therefore the effect that the original electrical components has on the audio signal as it's processed can only be emulated up to a point.

Bomb Factory are a group of producer/engineers with their own working studio. They've clearly put a lot of effort into modelling outboard gear that they're familiar with, and want to use in their Pro Tools rig. With the 1176 it's the compression knee that's the critical factor. Most modern compressor plug-ins are not so straightforward, are full of unfamiliar-looking parameters, and, as compression is the one thing most people are not confident with, it's nice to have a compressor you can load in and not worry about.

The compressors are by far the best of the bunch for us, with the SansAmp following close behind. The Moogerfooger and the Voce plug-ins are also good emulations with a unique sound, but they're costly, and there's no discount for buying the whole lot together. The Classic compressors and Sansamp will be worth it, but the Voce and Moogerfooger will probably only appeal to those craving the original sound.

With news of Bomb Factory's currently (re)designing the legendary Pultec EQ, there could be a new look for plug-ins from now on. Let's just hope they can start to offer them at a more reasonable price.

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Against Separate sub needed to get the best out of them

Verdict Good quality nearfields from one of the big names in speaker design

As you're probably well aware, there are enough different nearfield monitors around these days to be able to mix on a different pair every day of the month. Although the familiar 'white-coned' workhorses are still holding strong, they are invariably used alongside more up-to-date monitors, and these are, more often than not, an active pair.

By now, most of us know that active monitors can offer a more accurate response, due to their perfectly-matched internal amplifiers. Also, they're usually more difficult to damage, often due to in-built overload protection circuits.

Overview

The first thing you'll notice about the LSR25Ps is the die-cast aluminium construction. They look great, and, weighing in at a hefty 7.7kg, they're certainly not light, so positioning them anywhere unstable is not recommended. At roughly 11" in height, they are of similar proportions to most compact nearfields – JBL's own Control 1s spring immediately to mind, but the textured finish gives the LSR25Ps a far more pleasing professional appearance.

The drivers are both physically protected from harm: the LF driver has a perforated grille, and the HF driver has a single aluminium bar. The ports sit either side of the top of the LF driver and are contoured rather than simply drilled out – again, pleasing to the eye. Power switch and volume control are positioned at the bottom of the front baffle, either side of the grille-mounted JBL logo. One point worth mentioning is that the volume controls are notched, making it easy to get the respective levels right – a feature all too often overlooked in this price bracket.

Around the back, all connections are recessed vertically in a similar style to the Genelec 2029s. Input-wise, there's either balanced XLR at +4dB or an unbalanced RCA at -10dB, and each speaker has its

own IEC mains socket mounted alongside the audio connections. The back of the cabinet has fins, acting as a heat sink for the amps, and this is also where a mounting bracket can be attached.

Below these fins, vying for space with the technical information plate, are four dip switches, allowing the LSRs to be tailored for use with a sub-woofer, or even to compensate for positioning near a boundary. The remaining two switches let you boost or cut the HF response above 2.2kHz to compensate for dull or bright mixes – from bright or dead rooms, perhaps.

The LSR25P is a bi-amped monitor, featuring two high-quality drivers. The 8Ω LF driver has a 5.25" cone, made from tempered paper with a butyl rubber surround, and a 1.5" voice coil. The 4Ω HF driver, meanwhile, has a 1" tempered titanium composite diaphragm, and also a 1" voice coil.

The LF amplifier is a bridged Class A-B monolithic type with a sine wave power rating of 100W. This is crossed over at 2.3kHz by a fourth order electro-acoustic Linkwitz-Riley crossover to a 50W HF amplifier; also a Class A-B monolithic type.

As is becoming increasingly popular with monitor design these days, the LSRs feature an elliptical waveguide for the HF driver – referred to by JBL as an Elliptical Oblate Spheroidal (EOS) waveguide. Basically, this serves to increase the ideal listening area, or sweet spot, as well as ruling out the acoustic intrusion of reflections caused by poor HF driver mounting.

JBL are keen to point out in their manual that these speakers have been designed from the ground up, starting with a 'blank CAD screen', apparently. LSR stands for Linear Spatial Reference, a measurement and design philosophy that takes into account factors beyond the usual on-axis frequency response. JBL's EOS waveguide is claimed to give a listening window of ±30 degrees horizontally and ±15 degrees vertically, so the overall sound picture should be good.



words **Sean Vincent** images **Katherine Lane-Sims**

This new addition to the compact, easy-to-use series is yet surprisingly loud, with no ear fatigue in sight.

specifications

Frequency response

70Hz to 20kHz

Enclosure resonant frequency

55Hz

Maximum SPL

Less than 106dB at 1m

LF amp

100W

HF amp

50W

Variable attenuation

0 to 26dB
(9dB at 12 o'clock)

Crossover point

2.3kHz

Inputs

Balanced XLR/
unbalanced RCA

Power

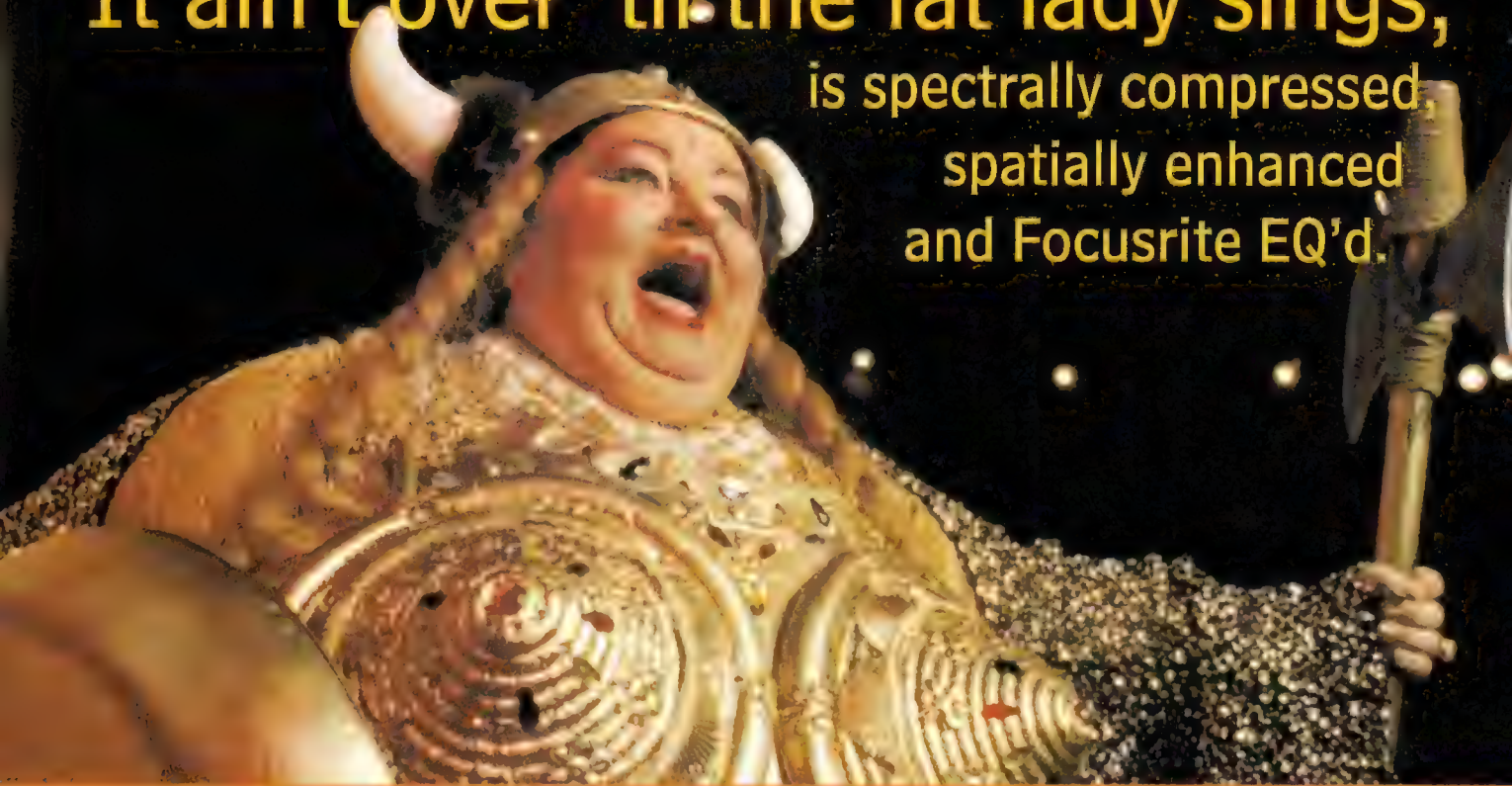
IEC

Dimensions

17.3 x 26.9 x 24.1cm
(W x H x D)



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» In use

We had a nice selection of quality monitors around the studio the first day we tested the LSR25Ps, so there was no escaping if they weren't up to the job. Straight out of the box, at their default settings, we immediately gave them some stick. First impressions? These bantam babies sure are loud!

Un-flattering but not harsh is a fair description. We instantly liked the JBLs for their honest and punchy sound. After a few hours mixing, it became apparent that these monitors don't cause too much listening fatigue. This is a serious issue in today's studios, as we're often required to work for hours on end. While some models make it feel like your ears are bleeding, this is certainly not the case with the JBLs.

In a series of listening tests, we used a mixture of dance tracks and some more subtle rock numbers. The bottom end comes across reasonably on the dance material, although there's a noticeable drop-off at about 70Hz. The top end is excellent, with lots of detail and no harshness.

Lining the JBLs up alongside some of the world's favourite monitors really gave us a shock: the LSR25Ps sound so similar to the 'best' of the bunch that it really proves difficult to tell them apart. In fact, the next day, when it was time to get back to work, we found ourselves opting for the JBLs out of all the available choices. And we're still using them now.

Verdict

Obviously, the LSR25Ps would be an excellent choice for making up a surround-sound monitoring system. That these monitors are sold individually suggests JBL have probably realised this already. Price-wise, these monitors represent fairly good value, though, to be fair to JBL, those looking at active systems may find the competition is slightly more expensive anyway.

JBL may have trouble persuading you to give them your cash, instead of one of the more specialist monitor manufacturers. All we can say is these are excellent monitors, and you'd be well advised to check them out before looking elsewhere. JBL have been making quality speakers for years, and although they may not have had a particularly high profile in studio monitoring lately, they know what they're doing. Let your ears and your mixes be the judge. ☺

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FMR Audio RNC1773

Budget stereo compressor

Price £199 (introductory offer) £250 (recommended retail)

For Stonkingly great performance ➔ Ridiculously inexpensive

Against Only works unbalanced

Verdict Superb stereo compressor at an unbelievable price

The confidently-named Really Nice Compressor has been seriously bigged up by just about everybody, and is set to become one of those products that will end up everywhere. It's a teeny, tiny box, with a great big sound that will probably sell shedloads.

The RNC1773 Really Nice Compressor (henceforth referred to as the RNC) is the first offering from three-year-old FMR Audio, a.k.a. married couple Mark and Beth McQuilken, both of whom have a track record of providing low-cost solutions to high-spec problems for some very heavyweight industrials, including Lockheed and Motorola, to name but two.

Although Mark patented an optical compressor in 1982, it is the development of DSP technology that has finally allowed FMR to uncork the fairy dust, resulting in the rarest of things – a debut product that is not only great, but, quite frankly, oozes personality.

Overview

The RNC is a stereo compressor with two modes of operation: Normal and Super Nice. Normal speaks for itself; Super Nice uses an amalgamation of three different envelopes, producing a very particular response, over which you still have basic control. This mode is really for mastering purposes; its aim is to eradicate audible compression artefacts from an entire stereo mix, while still compressing it.

Controls are standard: Threshold, Ratio, Attack, Release, Gain (indented at 0dB), Bypass and Super Nice. The RNC only talks to unbalanced equipment via five 1/4" jacks – two in, two out, and a sidechain access. One groovy feature, if you have Mackie-style inserts, is that you can use one stereo lead per side (tip send, ring return, sleeve ground). You can also wire in the traditional way, using mono jacks. The RNC will know what's happening, and the separate ins and outs

work as normal. The left and right sides can't be used independently; its either mono or linked stereo.

The unit is finished in two shades of grey. Pale grey for the metal panels front and rear, with a slightly darker shade for the plastic casing. It doesn't weigh much, and, as there are no metal sockets or knobs, it doesn't feel very substantial, but the knob action is satisfactorily smooth to make it feel good in your rack. Three of these can fit in one rackspace; it fastens to the rack adapter with a central screw at the base. Power is courtesy of a wall wart – you can't have everything.

In use

The RNC is simple to use. To start with, it was inserted in stereo across two channels of a Mackie 1604VLZ

with stereo jack cables, monitoring an Akai S3000 playing stereo drum samples. These drum samples were very ambient, which gave us lots of scope for dealing with big transients at the front and subtle, roomy tails at the back.

In bypass mode the unit is silent (it also allows signal through when power is down). Switching on the compressor in normal mode with a 1:1 ratio and 0dB gain made no difference at all to the sound – a good start. Winding the ratio full up and the threshold way down revealed the extremes possible with this beast; some hardcore compression is there if you want it – we like that! Slowly lengthening the attack time demonstrated the control available over the transients of a sound – from no attack to full attack, with some razor-sharp and really usable settings



Wired for sound

With two ins, two outs and a sidechain access all on 1/4" jacks, the connection is made

words **Steve Evans** photography **Katherine Lane-Sims**



along the way. The release control is just as extreme and has a definite characteristic envelope. As it happens, this envelope is very musical, and was very flattering to the kit, enabling us to 'tune' the pumpky ambience to the various rhythms and tempos – big smiles all round.

Using the RNC a little more discreetly with just 2-3dB of gain reduction, and more moderate attack and release settings, gave fantastic extra punch to kit that sounded great anyway. What joy!

Over a main vocal, once again in Normal mode, the RNC did the job well, evening out the big peaks in the voice and lifting it out of the backing track. Over a stereo group of backing vocals the release envelope became quite apparent, giving a slight juddery effect with big compression ratios. Here the Super Nice mode was switched on for the very first time. As mentioned earlier, this mode effectively layers compressors, giving a very smooth response. And it did just that.

Since the manual states that this mode is mainly intended for stereo mixes, we fed in some unmastered mixes from DAT. Following the instructions in the manual, we set the knobs at 12 o'clock and pressed the Super Nice button, with instantly enjoyable results – again, subtle, smooth compression, bringing details out of the mix, while controlling the loudest bits. The

best results were obtained by using fairly mild settings. Running test tones through the RNC revealed no processing imbalance between sides at all.

Verdict

FMR have achieved a great deal with the Really Nice Compressor. Overall, the RNC has all the audio characteristics of some of the meaty, expensive 'pro' compressors on the market. Its performance and sound quality are excellent – staggering even, given its unbelievably low cost. And its diminutive size makes it an ideal candidate for live or location work.

Every set-up should have at least one stereo compressor, and I wouldn't be surprised if many studios of all sizes will soon possess at least one of these little grey wonders.

For those of you on a tight budget, this is definitely, without doubt, the compressor for you. And even if you aren't counting the pennies, the RNC works well for tracking, mixing and basic mastering. Believe me, it's the best £199 you will ever spend.

More From: Audio Agency, PO Box 4601,
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Web: www.fmraudio.com

specifications

Connectors 1/4" unbalanced I/O (TS, or TRS for console inserts); L/R in and out, TRS sidechain

Modes Normal, Super Nice

Noise Less than 90dBu over 20-20kHz

Frequency response 10-100kHz ± 0.5 dB @ 0dBu

Distortion Less than 0.1%, no gain reduction @ 1kHz

Threshold range 40dBu to +20dBu

Ratio range 1:1 to 25:1

Output trim range ± 15 dB

Size 1/3 rack unit

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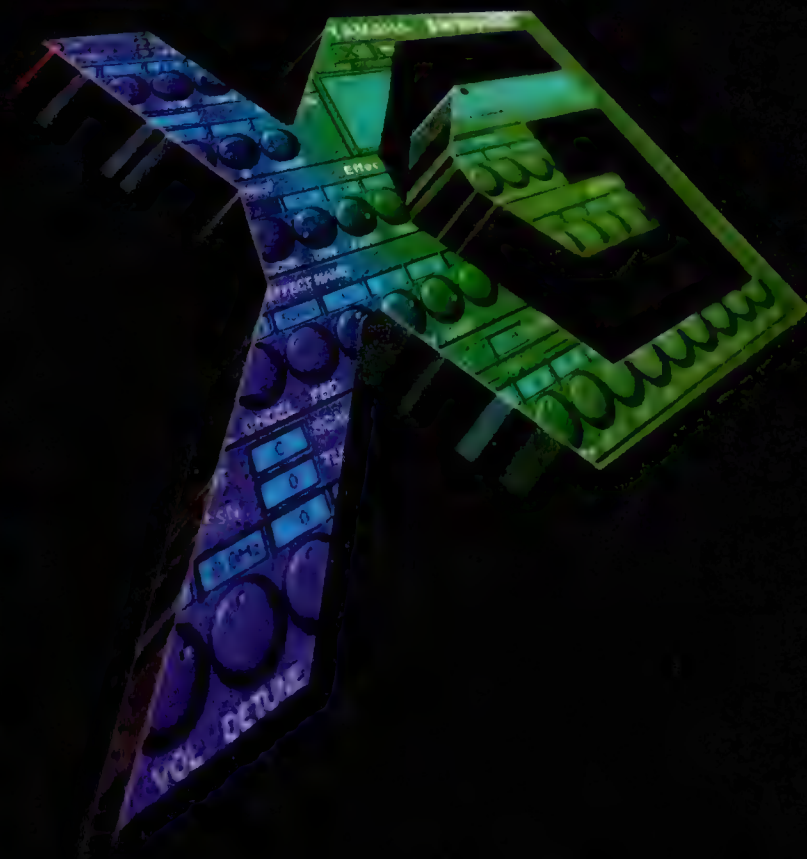
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MOTU Digital Performer 2.7

MIDI and audio sequencer for Mac

Price £549 Ⓢ Upgrade from V2.4 or earlier £99 Ⓢ Competitive crossgrade from rival package £199

For Multiple take cycle-recording Ⓢ Easy patch choosing

Ⓢ Great precision of both audio and MIDI editing

Against Confusing installation manuals Ⓢ Slightly difficult interface Ⓢ No direct VST plug-in compatibility

Verdict A well-integrated MIDI and audio package offering high levels of accuracy and control

For most people, choosing a heavyweight sequencing package is a simple affair, with only a couple of serious contenders out there. And we all know who they are. But there are others, of course – like Digital Performer, a product whose roots can be traced back to 1985; Performer being one of the first Mac music programs ever. Yet it's only in the past couple of years that MOTU have really been pushing their flagship further.

Upgrades have been fast and furious of late; a planned review had to be shelved to accommodate another, even more groundbreaking version. Already well established in the US, could Digital Performer 2.7 be the upgrade that finally lifts MOTU's 'Liberal Democrat' ranking over here in the UK?

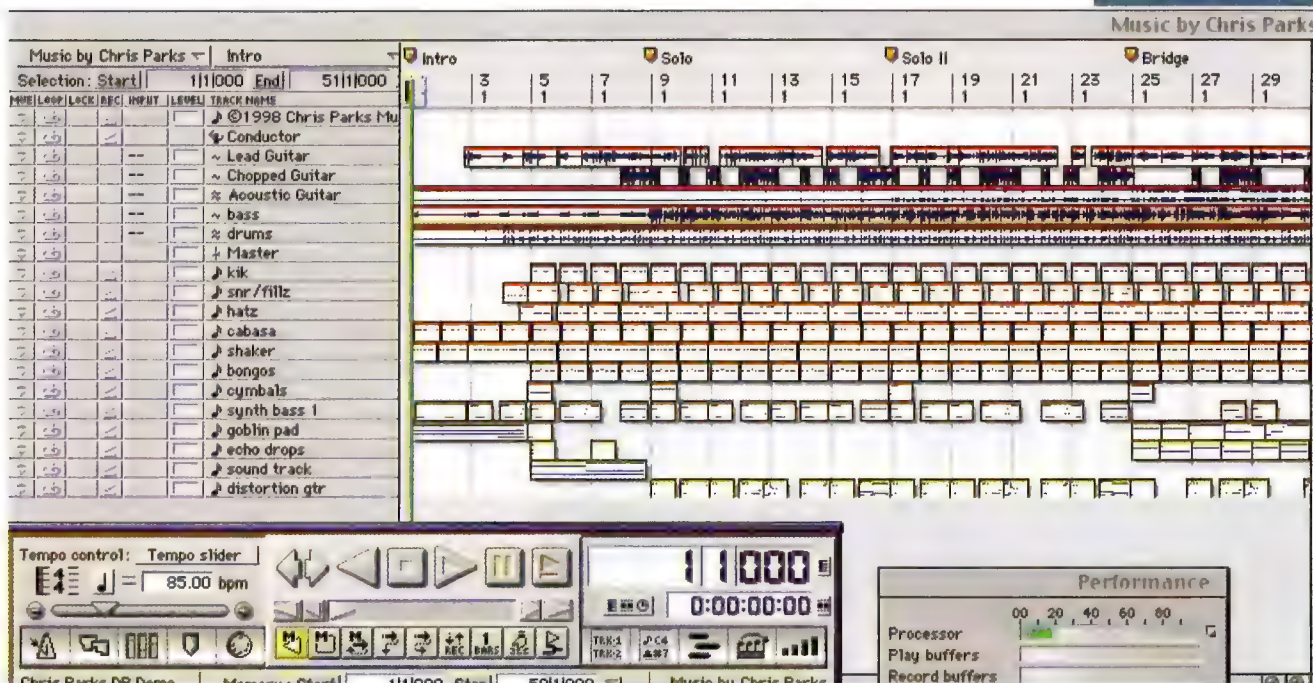
Overview

Digital Performer requires the supplied FreeMIDI extension, which performs a similar role to the more established OMS. But, apart from offering synchronisation and communication between FreeMIDI-compatible programs and studio hardware, it also provides a sound list of each MIDI device, allowing patches to be easily picked by name.

It is possible to run OMS alongside FreeMIDI, although this proved to be a bit troublesome when installed – not helped by numerous manuals, each holding vital bits of information. For this review, it was much easier to dump OMS, and run the G4 and USB MicroExpress interface with FreeMIDI alone. Ⓢ

words
Jim Warboy

As you can see, a huge amount of information is available in a limited amount of windows.



features

- ① Drum editor
- ① Audio loop-recording with POLAR
- ① Sample-accurate waveform editor
- ① QuickScribe score printing
- ① OMS-compatible FreeMIDI
- ① 8-, 16- and 24-bit audio processing with supporting hardware
- ① AIFF, SDII and WAV formats
- ① Adjustable PPQN – up to two trillion ticks
- ① MIDI Time Stamping
- ① Real-time auditioning of groove quantising
- ① Over 50 plug-in FX
- ① Supports TDM, Adobe Premiere and MOTU Audio plug-in formats
- ① Full support for Pro Tools|24 MIX, MIXplus and TDM
- ① MOTU and ASIO Driver-supported systems
- ① OMF Export to Pro Tools
- ① MIDI plug-in format
- ① Automated mixing and tempo-based effects control
- ① AudioTap and Rewire support
- ① Optional third-party waveform editor

Spectral Effects offer 3-D control over the high-quality pitchshifting



⊗ Digital Performer 2.7 offers most of what you might expect from a pro package. It does take a bit of time adapting to the interface, though, to be fair, this is to be expected when working in any new environment. Fortunately, the manuals provide valuable tutorials, and detailed balloon-style help eases this initial adjustment and learning curve.

As well as being able to record using the Mac's built-in audio facilities, there's direct support for (and multi-channel operation with) a wide range of the most popular audio I/O cards, allowing up to 24-bit recording – depending on the capturing hardware. The waveform editor allows stereo editing down to individual samples.

One of the most exciting features in Digital Performer is POLAR (Performance Oriented Loop Audio Recording). This is a recording module that records into

RAM, rather than writing to the hard drive, and opens up more possibilities, such as audio loop overdubbing. This doesn't quite work like MIDI, because, rather than simply erasing or adding to the previously recorded data, it records a new section on each cycle, allowing all the takes to be kept and individually auditioned. The dud ones can then be deleted, leaving the remaining takes to be either printed separately, or bounced down to one track on the hard drive.

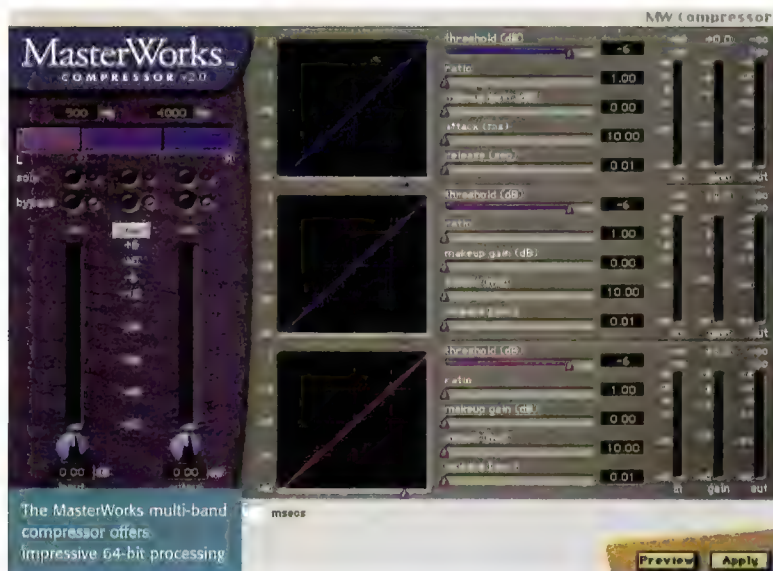
MOTU's MIDI Time Stamping provides a great degree of accuracy when recording and playing back MIDI data. When using a USB MIDI interface, it's possible to achieve response times within a third of a millisecond. This, combined with an adjustable PPQN (Pulses Per Quarter Note), helps to provide an environment with enormous precision over MIDI data.

The PPQN determines the resolution for editing and storing MIDI events, and in Digital Performer this is adjustable up to a staggering two trillion ticks! Although this may blow the competition away, many would argue that it doesn't really offer any perceptible advantage. Nevertheless, it does seem worth aiming for the greatest accuracy, bearing in mind that it's often the subtlety of a musical performance that makes something outstanding and worth capturing.

The Drum Editor is a welcome and long-awaited addition offering a sophisticated programming grid. It operates in a similar way to most grid-based drum editors, providing a useful tool to anyone dealing with rhythm programming.

The groove quantising facility allows real-time adjustment of faders affecting the quantisation, making it very easy to play around with the feel of the performance, quickly giving a track the 'funk factor'.

MIDI plug-ins can be used to arpeggiate, and apply pitchshifting and delays. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to have been much third-party interest in developing a very wide range of plug-ins for this new format. Shame.



On the audio plug-in side, however, there are over 50 high-quality plug-ins supplied using MOTU's own 32-bit MAS format, and there's certainly plenty of third-party choice as Digital Performer supports TDM and Adobe Premiere formats. Though it doesn't have official support for VST, those of you with a stack of VST plug-ins will no doubt be pleased to know that by using AudioEase's VST Wrapper it should be possible to use them in Digital Performer.

The supplied plug-ins now include a Ring Modulator, Stereo Delay and a Multimode Filter – 'straight out of a vintage modular synthesizer', according to MOTU's press blurb; replete with currently in-vogue simulated wooden end cheeks. As with all the audio plug-ins, their parameters can be adjusted automatically using tempo control. This helps to ease the mix automation process and keep effects, like LFOs or delays, in time with a track as it slows down or speeds up.

In use

Using Digital Performer on a session is a hassle-free experience, with all the flexibility of the sequencers we've come to know and love in recent years. Installation procedures would probably be clearer if the information was collated into one manual, however. Since new versions are released so frequently, it would also make sense to have an on-line installation manual on the CD-ROM.

With completely virtual mixing on the rise, it's gratifying to see support for MOTU's own AudioTap and the increasingly popular ReWire. The latter permits audio from other supporting programs, such as soft synths like ReBirth, to be fed directly into the Digital Performer mixer, where it can be processed and mixed alongside other data. This provides more flexibility, and helps achieve a smoother overall identity to a mix – allowing the same effects to be applied, for instance.

Using POLAR really helps when capturing audio takes – great for building vocal harmonies, for example; without clogging up the hard drive with unnecessary takes. Being able to loop and record is incredibly useful, too: you can take time to warm into the mood, and even play around with different ideas, instead of rushing in and hoping for a good take.

Being able to discard the unusable takes before committing to disk makes the management of audio files a lot easier – always a bonus to anyone working with lots of audio. It's amazing how quick those useless files can mount up! It also proves indispensable for building up percussive loops, before bouncing them down to a single file ready for processing.

The overall level of processing is impressive, and the Ring Modulator provides a great off-the-wall plug-in. Particularly worthy of a mention is the quality of the eVerb plug-in, which provides very smooth and pleasing results. After all the hard work, there's nothing worse than the sound of cheap reverbs trashing your projects.

As mentioned earlier, it's always difficult to adjust to a new software package – especially when it's something as central to operations as a sequencer, but Digital Performer doesn't take long to get your head around once things are up and running.

A great place for links, FAQs and tips is www.unicornation.com, an unofficial site that proves useful for sorting out those FreeMIDI queries.



The loop length and available RAM determine the number of takes POLAR allows

Verdict

Though there were some hiccups when using FreeMIDI with OMS, FreeMIDI offers some great enhancements to the sequencer, and it's good to see an alternative to OMS (considering its potentially unstable future).

POLAR is a welcome response to the increased availability of RAM, and shows the improvements to Digital Performer are not only helping it keep up with the pace of change, but also setting new standards.

With Digital Performer, MOTU have created an environment where they most certainly control and define the standards. They've created their own audio and MIDI plug-in formats, FreeMIDI, and take advantage of the facilities on offer in their own range of hardware. Indeed, Apple's 'Think Different' motto could well have been scripted for MOTU's long-running, Mac-based musical masterpiece.

Yet MOTU are far from being caught in a bubble. There's also an enormous amount of support for many other manufacturers' samplers, audio hardware, plug-in formats and software modules. Depending on your needs, it's possible to stay within the MOTU stable or integrate the program into a more diverse studio.

Digital Performer is a quality sequencer, covering the necessities and covering them well. There's no demo available to give you a taster of what's on offer, but MOTU offer a no-quibble money-back guarantee for anyone who takes the plunge, then decides it's not the package for them – not necessarily the best way to get software into the hands of the masses, but a good incentive to try out this well-implemented sequencing package nonetheless.

system requirements

To use built-in sound capabilities:

- ① Power Macintosh
- ① Minimum 40Mb RAM, 64Mb recommended
- ① System 7.5.5 or higher; 7.6.1 or later recommended; OS System 8.6 or higher to use USB MIDI devices
- ① 17" monitor or larger recommended
- ① Sound Manager 3.2.1, supplied (not required on G3s)
- ① SOM objects, supplied
- ① Shared Library Manager
- ① Shared Library Manager PPC
- ① FreeMIDI, supplied
- ① G3 recommended to use MOTU audio hardware systems

**More from: Musictrack, 2 The Granary Buildings, Millow, Nr Dunton, Bedfordshire, SG18 8RH
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Korg MS2000R

Rack analogue modelling synthesizer

Price MS2000 rack £599 ⓘ MS2000 keyboard £699

For Sounds great ⓘ Fun and creative to use

ⓘ Vocoder and virtual patch well-implemented

Against Limited polyphony and multitimbrality ⓘ Needs more memory locations

Verdict Could be the most creative analogue modelling synth on the market, even if the competitors have the specification edge

The demand for the analogue sounds of yore is showing no signs of decline, so it's hardly surprising that the last couple of years have thrown up a burgeoning selection of retro-style synths. With second-hand analogue gear still fetching handsome prices, manufacturers, many of whom were there the first time around, obviously fancy a slice of this pie.

However, there has been one significant development that's made the new breed of analogue sounding synths a success – analogue modelling. Indeed, the idea of modelling synthesis has really come of age with the latest bunch of synths. Anyone who's heard Novation's Supernova or Access' Virus knows that these synths mean business. Plus, they tend to be a lot more flexible than their awkward and often unreliable predecessors.

With such an illustrious analogue history, it may seem a little surprising that it has taken Korg so long to enter this end of the market. Thankfully, rather than start from scratch, they have noted the continued popularity of their MS10 and MS20 models, and designed a synth that takes the best of the past and combines it with the flexibility of today's technology. So, in the first year of the new millennium, it is fitting that Korg's new synth should be called the MS2000, available in both 44-note keyboard and rack versions.

Overview

The version on test here is the more compact, and maybe a little less stylish, rack version of the MS2K. However, aside from the keyboard and control wheels the two versions have identical features. Essentially, the synth offers two oscillators, one noise generator, two envelope generators, one resonant filter with high, low and band-pass options, two effects and an arpeggiator.

Polyphony is 4-voice, and two voices can be used at the same time, so technically the MS2000 is 2-part

multitimbral. However, in practice this is either in the form of a dual program, where two voices sound together, or a split program, where two voices are split to different sections of the keyboard.

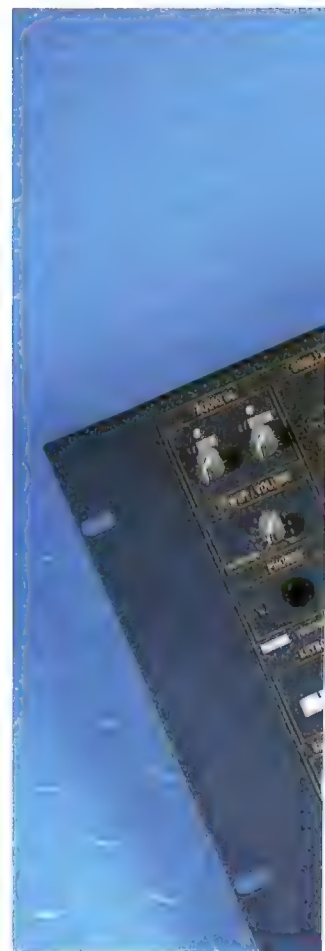
Compared to the competition, the MS2000's facilities could seem quite basic, but the emphasis here is on quality rather than quantity. So, in addition, the MS2K also features a fully-fledged vocoder, a modulation step-sequencer, a virtual patching system and an additional audio input for processing external sounds.

The front panel features a host of knobs and switches, all of which send out MIDI controller info, and is dominated by the 16-part step modulation sequencer. Rather than offer banks of presets, the MS2000 has eight banks of 16 patches – 128 in total, with six patches dedicated to vocoder settings. All patches can be written over.

The lack of extensive multitimbrality makes setting up the MS2000 very simple. The back panel is uncluttered with a simple stereo output on jacks, and two input jacks for external source and vocoder, respectively. For the latter there's a mic/line switch.

MIDI is catered for via the usual in, out and thru sockets, and there are two footswitch sockets. One of these is a volume pedal and the other is software-assignable to change programs, octaves, turn portamento or the arpeggiator on and off, or simply as a damper. Surprisingly, power to both rack and keyboard versions of the MS2000 is supplied via an AC adapter – not one with a special connector plug, luckily.

As mentioned, the front panel has a knob or switch for all the commonly-changed parameters, but if you need to delve further into the settings, they can be accessed on the LCD screen using the 'edit' and 'page' keys. Indeed, if you hit the edit key and adjust a parameter using one of the knobs, its parameter shows



CD info

tracks 11-12

The MS2000R in action, followed by a selection of choice sounds

words **Jon Musgrave** images **Gavin Roberts**



Let's get ready to rumble: a rack-load of 'knobular' analogue modelling synthesis at your service.

And the competition?

There's quite a healthy selection of rackmount analogue modelling synths on the market at the moment; three units that are physically similar to the Korg are Roland's JP8080, Novation's Nova and Access' Virus. However, all of these are quite a bit more expensive with street prices for the Virus and Nova between £800 and £900, and the JP8080 currently around £750.

In terms of facilities, the Virus offers the most, with 24 voices maximum, 16 parts, five effects and vocoder. Roland's JP8080 is the most established of this bunch, offering 10-note polyphony and 384 presets. The Nova was definitely the synth of '98, incorporating much of the Supemova, with the addition of a vocoder and three stereo outputs.

If you've got a lot more money to spend then Nord's Modular Rack retails at around £1,200 and offers 32-note polyphony.

At the same price as the MS2000R is the Quasimidi Polymorph, which also has a step sequencer, 8-note polyphony and 4-part multitimbrality.

However, one consistent thread with all these synths is that they each have their own character, irrespective of their spec list.

up on the screen anyway.

The layout of the front panel is very clear, with the synth controls themselves following the signal flow of the unit. So, from left to right, the two oscillators are followed by the mixer, which then feeds the filter and finally the amplitude controls. Modulating controls are found below. Again, from left to right, Envelope Generator 1 – automatically the filter envelope – is followed by Envelope Generator 2 – the amplitude envelope. Then come the two LFOs, the effects and the virtual patch sections.

This row of controls is shared with the 16 modulation sequence knobs. The 16 keys below these knobs act as bank selectors, or, in the case of the MS2000R, can be used as a keyboard. With the modulation sequence activated, the keys light up to show the progression of the sequence. When the synth is used as a vocoder, the knob functions are slightly different – indicated by the highlighted parameters on the legend.

Looking at the synthesis parameters in a little more detail, the two oscillators themselves are quite different. In addition to sawtooth, pulse, triangle and sine waves, oscillator one (OSC1) offers a vox wave, which simulates a waveform similar to the human voice, and a Digital Waveform Generating System (DWGS) wave with a choice of 64 harmonic additive waveforms.

OSC1 can also be set to white noise or 'audio in' for processing a source at the audio input. In addition to

the selector switch for OSC1, there are two control knobs. The effect of these is oscillator-specific. On the whole, control one affects the basic frequency, and control two the depth of LFO1. However, if you have a sine wave selected, it can be modulated by OSC2, and the depth of this is affected by control one. By contrast, if you have a DWGS wave, control one is redundant, but control two selects the DWGS waveform. OSC2 offers only three waves: sawtooth, square and triangle, but can be coarse and fine-tuned, and sync'd to OSC1. There is also a ring modulation option for all you sound effects junkies out there.

There are four filter types on offer: high pass, low pass and band-pass at 12dB/octave, and low-pass at 24dB/octave. In addition to the resonance and cutoff knobs, there's also an envelope depth knob, which is normalised to Envelope Generator 1. This allows positive and negative depth settings. In addition, there are also velocity sensitivity and keyboard tracking knobs.

In the output amplifier section overall level and pan can be adjusted, as well as the amplitude envelope settings. The envelope can act either as an envelope follower, or simply as a gate. Again, there are velocity sensitivity and keyboard tracking parameters, plus a distortion option. This is either on or off, so you'll have to adjust the oscillator levels to get the desired results.

The two most interesting features of the MS2000 are the modulation sequence and the





specifications

Polyphony

4-voice

Multitimbrality

2-part (within same program)

Tone Generation

2 oscillators, 1 noise generator

Effects

Modulation (chorus/ensemble/phaser), delay (stereo/cross/LR delay)

Arpeggiator

6 types

Programs

128

Filters

12dB/oct (high, low, band pass), 24dB/oct (low pass)

Inputs

One switchable mic/line for vocoder, one for external input

Outputs

Stereo, headphone

Weight

2.8kg



» virtual patch options. The mod sequence allows you to specify a sequence length of up to 16 steps with a choice of types – forward, backward, loop, for example – and modify up to three parameters of choice using the 16 knobs. Given that there are only six types of arpeggio on offer, this is great for creating more interesting sequences.

However, that's only the tip of the iceberg: you can assign any parameter to the knobs and even record real-time movements. The virtual patching system is definitely passed down from the MS20, which had physical patching in addition to a normalised signal path. The MS2K offers four virtual patches, which are stored with the program. The source parameters can be either envelope generator or LFO, keyboard velocity or tracking, or one of two MIDI sources. The destinations can be the pitch of either oscillator, control 1, noise level, cut-off, amplitude, pan and LFO2's frequency.

In use

The first two things you notice with the MS2000R is that the power switch is combined with the master volume, which seems a little strange, and, when powered up, the synth seems to default to program A01, rather than the last selected program. But these points aside, the user-friendly design means you can start tweaking straight away, with no need to refer to the manual at all.

In fact, rather than page through the presets, which would be normal when trying a new synth, the temptation is to find a good base preset and start modifying. Many synths rely heavily on their internal effects to add life to otherwise boring sounds, and with the MS2000 there are only two effects – delay and modulation – so it's easy to switch these off and hear the basic sound.

Trying this out on a couple of sounds proved very encouraging, with the MS2000R not exhibiting the 'fizziness' which many digital synths tend to have. In fact, as an analogue emulation device, the Korg is extremely convincing. Even with the resonance up full – it doesn't self oscillate, by the way – sweeping down the cut-off was not too glitchy.

The presets themselves cover a broad range of analogue and dance-orientated sounds, including good pads, leads and basses. So even with only 128 presets there's plenty there to keep most people happy. A couple of the bass sounds certainly wouldn't be out of place in a UK garage tune, so Korg's programmers have definitely got an eye for the new, as well as the old.

With the step sequencer buttons doubling as a keyboard, it's certainly possible to use the MS2000 rack on its own, but as soon as you start to work alongside other sequencers tempos start to drift. As you would expect, the Korg *will* sync to MIDI clock, but with many of its presets using tempo-related elements – like arpeggios and delays, it has a useful setting whereby it syncs to MIDI clock when detected, switching back to its own internal clock when no MIDI clock is there.

Given Korg's history, you would expect the vocoder option to be good, and it doesn't disappoint. The six presets cover subtle vocoding that French outfit Air would be proud of, right up to full-on, Darth Vader-type effects. If anything, it proves just how convenient it is to have a vocoder and synth in the same box.

One other nice touch is the inclusion of an 'original value' LED next to the LCD display. This lights up when the knob or button you are modifying achieves its original value.

Verdict

The great thing about analogue modelling synths is that they emulate synths – not acoustic instruments. This may sound like an obvious point, but the reality is the results should be pretty convincing. In the case of the MS2000 they are very convincing, and a damn sight more reliable than their ancestors. Korg have designed a great little synth here, which is fun, creative and sounds great. Okay, it won't play numerous sounds at the same time, but so what? Ignore the statistics; use your ears.

**More from: Korg (UK) Ltd, 9 Newmarket Court, Kingston, Milton Keynes, MK10 0AU
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Ⓢ Compressor on Voice Strip is great

Against Intonator is a bit fiddly in parts Ⓢ No de-esser on Intonator

Ⓢ No threshold control on the Voice Strip compressor

Verdict Excellent plug-ins, especially the Voice Strip. All the features of more costly hardware, with added automation

words
Seb Pecchia

What with the Native Bundle, Gold Bundle; the 'bundle' with wings on it, TC are really hitting the plug-in market hard these days. And each of these bundles is capable of more functions and effects than most of the world's biggest studios put together! Probably.

Many love this TDM world; others favour a healthy balance of old and new living in perfect harmony. And mentioning harmony, here's TC turving out Voice Tools,

the next set of juicy TDM plug-ins to be unleashed upon an already heavily-saturated marketplace.

As you might guess, this is a plug-in bundle aimed specifically at processing vocals and voices – a software version of the Intonator and Voice Strip bundled together for the flexible world of TDM. You're gonna need some serious kit to use it, though – a bank account-draining Pro Tools rig, for starters.

The Voice Strip contains all the tools you need for recording to hard disk



Overview

It has to be a Mix/Mix Plus system 4.x or 5.x running on a PowerMac, G3 or G4. Take your pick. This plug-in absolutely chomps DSP, so don't buy it if you're still on a 3-core system, because it just won't work.

As expected with TC, Voice Tools' screen views are very dynamic – retro even, with silver-grey panels, big chunky virtual knobs and VUs everywhere. Each control area (when activated) glows with an iridescent yellow backlit effect. On the whole, visual impressions certainly don't disappoint.

Intonator

The TC Intonator is the more modern-looking of the two plug-ins, featuring 'auto-tune'-style processing. It does everything you might ever want from such a tool, with well laid-out functions, allowing for ease of use and quick operation. A large indicator window – looking a bit like a guitar tuner – shows selected scales and keys, as well as input pitch and correction amounts. Some of the details in this window are a little poky, so if you're short-sighted get out your reading glasses.

If your program material is in C Major, then select the scale and key in the appropriate 'scale/key' indicator window. If you do need to tune the plug-in to your recorded material, then do so using the tune reference knob. This line up method is great, as it gives



off a reference tone, ensuring tones can be matched accurately and very fast. You'd be amazed how many songs supposedly in C Major are actually in C#!

Once the target pitch is sorted out, it's then time to actually correct a pitching problem. Let's say we've got a vocal in C# that should be in C Major. As the singer's slightly out-of-tune vocal comes into the Intonator, the closest note to it will light up on the keyboard in red.

The main display will also light up the strip meter in red, showing how far the input pitch is from the target pitch – maybe 100 cents or so out, in this case. By clicking on the Pitch window, we can adjust the correction window size to 100 cents or more – no less, or the window won't 'stretch' to incorporate the desired correction amount. The amount of correction is shown on the same strip metre. It lights up in green this time, and moves from the outside of the metre to the centre position. At the centre there will be 100% correction, and no red visible. Very guitar tuner-like, isn't it?

A potential problem could arise as your singer's vocal comes into the Intonator: it does have a tendency to get a bit confused and fluctuate between two notes – especially if the input signal is bang in the middle somewhere. To solve this, it's simply a matter of clicking in the 'hold' function button while on the correct note. This will force the Intonator to keep the correct pitch – problem solved.

Once the signal has passed through the Intonator it travels on via an adaptive low-cut filter, which is quite a handy tool, to say the least. It lets you remove those nasty rumbles, like tapping feet near mic stands or cable noise at around 60Hz. Even obtrusive breathing sounds can be sorted out. A nice little extra; shame there's no de-esser, though.

Voice Strip

The Voice Strip is a truly one-hit vocal tool, though its big, retro VUs and PPMs may also find favour with the broadcast fraternity. A toggle switch is present to view the input or output signal when working in stereo, but the left and right VUs will display in/out in each window, respectively, if you are working in mono.

Again, there's a low-cut filter for ridding your work of those nasty rumbles, and it operates very well between 60Hz to 120Hz. A gate is provided with threshold and intensity controls to further eliminate background noises – very handy during pauses. The threshold does the obvious, and the intensity control deals with attack, ratio and release in a combo style.

Then there's the de-esser. It's always a good thing to have one around, and it makes the lack of one on the Intonator far less of a problem. Sibillance will not be a problem either, as it handles it very well.

There's a really neat sidechain 'monitor' function, allowing you to set up a specific frequency that the de-esser will reference to, and be triggered by, making it very accurate and useful.

Finally, there's the compressor section and Voice EQ. By default, the EQ comes pre-compressor, but there are options for reversing this, if required. The EQ might be basic in looks, but its built-in soft limiter gives a real warmth to the signal – very analogue.

The low-band shelving filter has 18dB of gain, plenty enough for most of us, and ranges from 100Hz to 350Hz. The mid-band filter has the same gain spec,



The Intonator, with TC's fondness for simplicity adhered to.

and ranges between 700Hz to 7kHz. Bringing up the rear – or should we say top – is the high-band filter, which is fixed-frequency at around 2.5kHz.

The soft-limiting – or 'softsat' in TC-speak – is another highlight worthy of mention. This gives a smooth, juicy 'tube-ness' to the signal. Nice.

The compressor also has a bit of an 'old thang' about it; indeed, TC have tuned it as such. It's funny how modern gear is being made to sound like the old stuff. Anyway, the compressor basically gets a side-chain input from the output signal, and the soft-limiting is always present in the signal, making for an agreeable feedback compressor, just like they made aeons ago.

Threshold is fixed at -24dB, which is not very compliant with compression use, but it still works. Ratio controls range from 1:1 up to 64:1 – a limiter, basically; best used on vocals, somewhere around 4:1, unless you're feeling wacky. Nevertheless, it works well, giving vocals an air of smooth, musical lushness.

Verdict

TC Voice Tools is another bundle in a long line of plugins fighting for market supremacy. As bundles go, this one sounds professional and isn't overly expensive, considering what you get.

You might be tempted to write it off as another one of those 'Oops, my recording's rubbish, so I'll mend it with this'-type plug-in. After all, it's worth remembering that it's always better to get a good 'in-tune' vocal from the outset. But hey, the world can't always wait around for an artist to get it right – right? So get one of these and that vocal should be singing sweetly. But be warned: bags of warmth, coupled with some really nice features, means you'll end up using it on guitars, drums, bass – everything but the kitchen sink!

More from: Arbiter Group, Wilberforce Road, London NW9 6AX Tel: 020 8970 1909 Web: www.arbitergroup.com

system requirements

- ① Pro Tools Mix/Mix Plus 4.x or 5.x
- ② Power Mac G3/ G4

CD info

track 01
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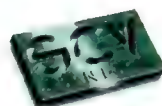
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What's the SECRET of a great

REMIX!?

let's find out, as 14 of the
world's most IN-DEMAND remixers
share their PRODUCTION WISDOM...

PLUS
two chances to WIN
a remix deal
see page 78

This month *The Mix* takes the lid off the world of remixing. And given that 'name' remixers often have a higher profile than the artists they remix, it's about time! Yes indeed, remixing is big business these days, often making legends of its most popular exponents overnight.

So how did it all begin? Rewind to the late '70s, and tracks like Donna Summer's 'I Feel Love' just weren't long enough to satiate those substance-fuelled American clubbers, so the labels started to insist on a much longer mix with a more appropriate rhythm section – the rest, as they say, is history.

Now, of course, remixing has become an art form in its own right. Gone are the days when merely pumping up the beat made the difference. Anything less than a full deconstruction followed by stamping a whole new character/attitude/genre onto a track just won't cut it. Anyone who doubts it need only heed the words of some of the world's finest that we've tracked down to bring you the definitive look at remixing – from the inside. Get the lowdown from the people who are doing it, and doing it well. Following that, we've got the results of our amazing Tidy Trax competition from issue 71, and for those of you who didn't win last time, no problem – there's another two chances to remix your way onto a commercial release, this time with X-ert Productions/Rebel Recordings.

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PLUS...
check out our
review of the
ultimate remix machine
Roland's VP-9000
starting on
page 26





REMIX!

Joey Negro

When A&R men want a disco house mix, they turn to the master

Disco house king Joey Negro, previously known as Dave Lee, has been at the very forefront of UK remixing since the start of the 1990s, when that particular cottage industry was really in its infancy. With his own remix studio – and credits that include M People, Diana Ross, the Brand New Heavies, Dan Hartman's million-selling 'Relight My Fire' and the international Red Hot and Dance project – if anyone knows about the art and graft of serious music restyling, it's Joey Negro.

For our Joey though, it's often more pleasure than work. "To tell you the truth, it's really nice to bring out stuff, to be able to release a track from an older mix or arrangement. That original mix might well be OK but it's usually one that most people just can't hear. You have to bring it out. Symphonia's 'Can't Get Over Your Love' is a good example of something where we really changed the music and more and more people then liked the track – and bought it. The Brand New Heavies' 'Dream Come True' was a good little fine-tune I enjoyed doing, just tweaking the drums around a bit.

"It was the same with Blaze's 'Wishing You Were', where the drums were too far away from the house thing. So I stuck some of that on it, added some backing vocals and did a few tape edits and suddenly more people went for it."

Which was a nice experience for Joey since the US duo had been a big influence on him in the first place, especially on the remix front. "Back in 1990 my remixes were like those that quite a few other people were doing at the time: they'd involve, say, a new intro and a breakdown and then maybe I'd tighten the drum sound a little and that would be it. So watching Blaze at work was something of a revelation, the way they'd strip a song down to just one vocal track and then build it up with arrangements and samples of their own. They'd also do things in live and mix live, which would sometimes go wrong, but it was still fascinating to see and hear. Nowadays, of course, stripping a track down happens a lot more and you'll often get sent a track with just the vocals on, or just the vocals and one guitar or something. And then you just have to build it up."

As with all teachers everywhere, there's a world of difference between the cowboy and the master tradesman. "It does take a few years of studio experience to really get a track from A to B. You have to practice with your own stuff if necessary. Just learning to finish things is one part of it. I've recorded tracks myself that I now know were a lot less than perfect but at least I finished them – and that point you haven't got anything."

"And then you have to get them out there. I know that's harder than ever in some ways, but you have to do that. You have to get that feedback from the public – if the feedback's bad, at least you know what you're doing wrong."

"And then you have to develop your own sound. I almost always use a Mutator Filter on samples, and I've just bought another one, a Filter Factory. It can sound really one-dimensional if everything comes off a keyboard, so many of my samples are taken from live players who I then sample and resample before filtering to get that disco house sound. I now know quite a lot of really good guitarists, bassists, vocalists... but they're often busy, so I have to plan ahead when doing a four or five-day remix – like, will I be ready for the guitarist by Tuesday? Is the chord progression ready yet?"

But even the most seasoned pro can get bogged down after hearing the same track over and over again for five days, something that Joey himself is well aware of. "To make sure I haven't lost my tired ears I always take CD-Rs home. And then I'll check a remix by comparing it with some I've done before that I'm happy with – and then something from a similar genre. That may be what I like to work in my own studio more and more, because different studios have different samples and different monitors. At least at my own place, with the sonics, I know when something there is happy or too flat or whatever."

Of those who do get it just right, Joey reckons the following to be amongst the best. "Currently there's quite a few people doing nice stuff – there's Pete Heller and Full Intention – and, on the hard house tip, the Sharp Boys are pretty good, while if you want a trance remix then Matt Dore is probably the guy to go for." Or, if the disco side of house is your thing, you'd probably be best advised to call one Joey Negro. • *Phil Strongman*

Look out for 'Saturday' – by Joey Negro (feat. Two Boom), out 17 July on Incentive

MJ Cole

When it comes to remixing, the 'less is more' maxim is often best, according to this classically-trained garage guru

MJ Cole is one of the most respected garage producers out there. This classically-trained musician had sufficient skill to tackle Philly-sound MFSB band leader Dexter Wansel's most acclaimed production. They said it could never be done, but when, together with Jean Paul 'Bluey' Maunick from Incognito, he came up with a remake of The Jones Girls' 'Nights Over Egypt', some were moved to comment that the original had been surpassed.

Allying his love for classical symphonic arrangements with fluid jazz textures, Cole has produced a debut album for Gilles Peterson's Talkin' Loud label that is set to take UK garage to a higher level with choice cuts like 'Sincere', 'Crazy Love' and a version of the old Modulations' blaxploitation soul classic 'It's Rough Out Here'.

You initially made your name as a remixer of acts like Another Level, All Saints, Incognito and Masters At Work. Do you have a different approach to remixing acts who, like the latter, already have a reputation for remixing themselves?

I think that there's a certain amount of respect for each other's sound, and, perhaps, a little more emphasis on the creative process. With 'Nights Over Egypt' we were both so into the original that it was a true labour of love. The end goal was always to make a record that the composer could be proud of, and, in fact, Bluey tells me that Dexter Wansel was positive about the project. As far as stuff like All Saints and Another Level are concerned, they are high-profile popular acts looking to the remixer to introduce their sound to the scene from which the remixer has made their name.

Much has been made of your classical expertise. Coming into the musically more 'elementary' world of garage, is this advantageous, in terms of credibility?

Not really. It's an element of my sound. Often it's the simple tunes that are the most effective, especially in dance music. Sometimes the most basic idea works best and complex progressions can make a good, simple melody suffer. From a garage viewpoint, I remember hearing Armand Van Helden's 'Sugardaddy'. That was a seminal track. To me it was the beginning of garage as we know it – the two-step UK sound. It was relatively simple, yet so effective. My roots are also in jazz, funk and soul, and I also like to highlight elements of that. It's about creating a signature for yourself.

Do you think that the remix culture has 'de-musicalised' the industry?

Yes and no. I recently did an Incognito remix album with the likes of Bluey, Spacek, Ski, DJ Venom and Tom Middleton. The vibe was so positive and, like I said, everyone was looking to bring their different flavours to the party.

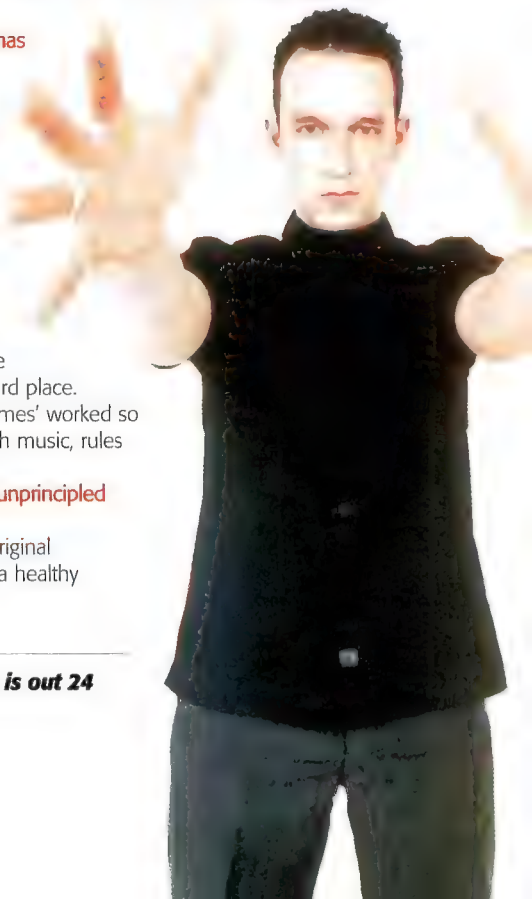
But something like Bev Knight's remix of 'Made It Back' creates a dilemma in me. Remixes that use a classic old backing track always leave me caught between a rock and a hard place. However, the use of Chic's 'Good Times' worked so well that it gets you thinking that with music, rules are made to be broken.

So are you saying there is a certain unprincipled element to remixing?

The bottom line is that there is an original expression. Overall, I think it's been a healthy innovation in the music industry.

• *Jon Andre Holley*

Sincere, MJ Cole's debut album, is out 24 July on Talkin' Loud



REMIX!

Spike Stent

He may not write the songs that make the whole world sing, but mix engineer Spike Stent certainly knows a thing or two about making them sound better

Mark 'Spike' Stent rose to prominence on the strength of his work with the KLF in the early '90s. He has since gone on to build up a credit list that reads like a *Who's Who* of pop and rock over the past 10 years, and many would argue that he is the world's best mix engineer. Check your record collection – chances are that Spike's name will appear on more than one recording.

Whereas many engineers and producers tend to favour a particular style of music, Spike's back-catalogue covers everything from U2 and Oasis to the Spice Girls and Massive Attack. All too often, records sound 'nice' or 'safe'. Spike, however, can always be counted on to come up with something unique, and he is willing to try anything to capture the right vibe. His abilities as a mix engineer have earned him the kind of aura that has surrounded Bob Clearmountain since the '80s. You want a killer mix? Go and see Spike.

In time-honoured tradition, Spike is invariably asked to work on a mix after it's already been 'had a go at', but is still lacking that all-important vibe. For him, the most common culprit is "usually something to do with the rhythm. Maybe the groove isn't right, or sometimes the parts need looking at. It could be that the hook hasn't been realised properly. Often, it's all on tape or in the sequencer, but not in the right place. So, I'll take the part, manipulate the sound, and then put it back."

Mix engineers often spend hours or even days getting the recording right. Ranking recording over performance – or vice-versa – is the \$64,000 question here. Yet Spike is quick to assert his position, and in no uncertain terms: "Performance is everything – *always*. Fuck the sound!" So what does Spike see as the main aims of a good mix? Free of any technological babble, his reply is disarmingly simple: "To bring the song across," he declares. "To bring it to the full, and realise what the artist or producer is trying to achieve. All too often, after a long recording process, people tend to lose direction. I've done it myself. It's just something that happens, so what I bring is a fresh perspective. That's why people get me in."

"Sometimes I'll change things a lot; sometimes I won't change anything, other than maybe just rebalancing and re-EQ'ing the mix to get it sounding tough and pumping. It really all depends on the music. I'm very much a feel-based sort of guy. I never think about the technical side of things. It's more a case of, 'Does it feel right?' 'Is the groove right?' It's about getting the vibe across. Whether it's rock, dance or some dirty hip hop track, for me, it's all about getting the song across."

Spike's studio, recently custom-built within the confines of Olympic Studios, is probably the best-equipped mix room in the country, if not the world. A winning combination of excellent acoustics (courtesy of Sam Toyoshima), a relaxed atmosphere (real daylight and a garden view) and a most amazing collection of synths, samplers, valve outboard and Genelec monitoring make this a one-stop mix heaven. Unsurprisingly, Spike is constantly confronted with a multitude of



recording formats – a hazard of his trade. "Things arrive in various formats for me – whether it be Pro Tools files, 2" analogue, 48-track digital, Logic Audio files, or even ADAT or DA88. But more often than not I'll transfer it all to Pro Tools. This is purely because I'll often feel that the arrangement is not right, and I like working to an arrangement, rather than having to edit it later. I like to have the dynamics of a tune there, rather than having to remember that it's going to change later. It's no good having the artist there when you're trying to get an idea across if the arrangement isn't sorted out, and then saying, 'Oh, we'll fix that later.' That's no good to anyone."

With such a huge array of goodies at his fingertips, surely there must



be some favourites that get used regularly? "I've got this mad collection of old guitar pedals I use a lot," reveals Spike. "It depends where the mood takes me, really. I've got a load of old valve compressors that I like a lot – some early '60s stuff, like the Gates compressors from America, and Neve EQs. Actually, I've got a new favourite: the Electrix Filter Factory. I love that – it's brilliant! I also use a lot of old delay lines – Copycats and the like. I've also started using the new Line6 stomp-pedals a lot.

"Then there's plug-ins: a lot of the Waves stuff is quite interesting. And on Pro Tools 5 there's the new Virus synth patch, which is great for manipulating drums through, and then recording them. I love that.

"Synth-wise, I love my Junos and Nords. I've got a great Jupiter 6, as

well as an MS20. Then there's the Prophecy, which is amazing. I tend to surround myself in the studio with everything, and then I can just pick and choose." Lucky for some...

Although Spike's forte is mixing, he's often called in to remix a track and give it a new edge. Clearly, different disciplines demand different approaches: "A lot of the stuff I get to remix is nicely recorded, and very well done, but I'll compress the hell out of it and distort it, then mix that in with the other stuff, and then compress the hell out of it again. A lot of that material is too nice and not dirty enough for me." Is it sometimes difficult to know when to stop? "No, I just keep going – it can always be undone. But if you don't try something, you'll never know."

That Spike likes to work in his own studio most of the time, surrounded by his beloved gear, is understandable. Playing devil's advocate for a moment, if he could only keep one item, what would that be? Spike's sense of humour comes to the fore: "That's a hard one – can't I have two?" After careful consideration, he further proffers, "it would have to be my SSL desk *and* Pro Tools."

Spike's G-series SSL has always had a unique sound – a sound he is very protective of: "It's the way that it distorts," he maintains. "The main mix buss is different; there's some old cards in there which they keep trying to tell me I need to update, but I'm like, 'No way! Leave them, don't touch them.' If it ain't broke, leave it."

"I'm very much a feel-based sort of guy. I never go after the technical side of things. It's more a case of, 'Does it feel right?' 'Is the groove right?' It's about getting the vibe across"

Unlike some of today's engineers and producers, Spike is a big fan of SSL EQ and compression: "I'll always use the SSL Quad compressors over the main mix. First, I'll run it through a GML EQ, and then into the compressor – 2:1 set to stun! No really, I like to get it pumping. Obviously, you've got to be careful, but I like to mix that way."

Since working with U2's vintage Neve desk, Spike has also acquired one from CTS studios. He likes the EQ on that, too. "They've all got their place," he grins, "it's just down to how you use them, really."

We've already established the importance of Spike's Pro Tools system. But what did he use before? "I've been with Pro Tools since the beginning," he reveals. "I had the old SoundTools or Sound Designer II back in 1988 or '89 – it's been at least 10 years."

So is Pro Tools the way forward? "Totally. That's why I haven't got into digital consoles. I see the Pro Tools recording side of things as a console *and* a hard disk recorder. I've invested a lot of money in it, because I see it as the future." Has he checked out Digidesign's Pro Control, the hardware controller for Pro Tools? "Yeah, there's one sitting over there. It's a good bit of kit – especially if you're from the engineering side of the fence and like the feel of real faders, rather than a mouse. It definitely has its uses."

As for Spike's mastering format of choice: "I like to go to 1/2" analogue," he states. "I've got an ATR 100, which I love, but I also go to timecoded DAT, via an Apogee AD8000 with soft limit on, as well as 24-bit versions – bit split from the AD8000 straight-to a DA98. Then I leave it up to the cutting engineer what he prefers to use; usually depending on the type of music. I personally always go for 1/2", but there's been times where everybody just loved the 24-bit version."

Credited on such a range of quality recorded material, one can easily appreciate Spike's self-imposed dilemma when asked to name a favourite or two: "Oh God, no," he recoils. "There's too many! I guess a lot of the Massive Attack stuff would have to be in there, and the Bjork stuff I've done, as well as the Oasis album; also the new Madonna record, which is just amazing."

It's easy to see why Spike has become hot property. His willingness to embrace new technology while hanging on to classic equipment that will never age has enabled him to carve out a lucrative niche in today's often overcrowded pool of producers and engineers. But by far his greatest asset has to be his recognition of the fact that song and performance is of paramount importance. We would all do well to remember that the next time we're staring blankly at the edit page on our sequencers. • Sean Vincent

REMIX!

The Sharp Boys

From soul divas and dance producers to teen sensations, everybody's after the golden touch of this hard-hitting duo

It's been five years since Steven React and George Mitchell (a.k.a. The Sharp Boys) first unleashed their own brand of chunky house on an unsuspecting club scene with *Sharp Tools Volume One*. These days, you've probably heard their remix talents at work on the Backstreet Boys, Five, Geri Halliwell and Madonna, or on to one of their countless underground tracks. They are now among the most respected and sought-after remixers in the world, enjoying success after success.

And The Sharp Boys do all this while maintaining one of the busiest DJ schedules in the world *and* presenting their Saturday night show on Kiss FM London. Whether remixing boybands or dancefloor classics, Steven (left of photo) and George always stamp their authority on a track, taking it to new and grateful crowds the world over. As with all Sharp productions, incredibly full sounds work in tandem with undeniably funky basslines, all topped off with a sprinkling of catchy vocals and compelling stabs.

Dreem Teem

Clubland and radio dance cheek to cheek for this top production and remix trio

The Dreem Team are currently riding the crest of a wave. Having graduated from London's Kiss FM to a Galaxy networked show, they are now part of Auntie Beeb's loving family, hosting their own weekly Radio One show each and every Sunday. Every bit the modern music movers and shakers, they have more than matched their media achievements with a successful career as a self-contained production and remix 'teem'.

Their recent smash hit single 'Buddy X (versus Neneh Cherry)' consolidated the now huge UK garage sound within the mainstream. 'The Dreem Teem Theme' remains a seminal UK garage work, as is the group's remix of All Saints' 'Booty Call' – one of the biggest hits to employ the notorious sped-up vocal technique. That mix was a massive smash in clubland, as was their pioneering r'n'b garage sound clash on Shola Ama's 'Much Love' – a fusion of the two styles, when Craig 'Fill Me In' David was a mere sweet 16! And their mixes for Colour Girl, Destiny's Child and Amira, to name but a few, have marked them out as one of dance music's hottest remix properties.

According to Dreem Teemer Spoony (far left in photo), "As a whole, mainstream is getting a little bit more radical – just a *little* bit. It's all about timing. Most people when they listen to the radio, don't wanna be thought of as fuddy duddies. Now, as well as listening to Britney and Ronan, you can listen to a little bit of the future with



Considering the huge number of international pop acts you've remixed, how does it feel to be in more 12-year-old girls' singles collections than S Club 7 or Billie?

We'd never really thought about it until you asked, but now you mention it, it does seem quite ridiculous.

What was the first remix you did, and how did you get it?

Urban Discharges' 'Proper House on MCA' was our first – that was in 1995. We had just done *Sharp Tools Volume One* and Tony De Vit was playing it at Trade and there was an A&R guy there who liked it. That's how we got our first remix.

Is there a special art to remixing, aside from the usual production skills?

We approach a remix in the same way as a track. Obviously we look at the vocal and either build up the track around it or chop it up depending whether it's a vocal or a dub, but we still commit the same time and effort.

Is there more pressure on you to deliver the goods to a fixed deadline with remixes than if you're doing your own track from scratch?

Deadlines can be anywhere from a few days to a month, but normally there's no pressure as we allow ourselves enough time to do them. Having said that, we do occasionally find ourselves in the studio at night with a mix due in the morning. Then the pressure can be good or bad, with the adrenaline rush either helping create a vibe or making things impossible.

What's the weirdest remixing experience you've ever had?

It has to be the time we were doing two remixes of a big Japanese pop act for Avex. We

had to do a full vocal and a dub mix, but of course we couldn't understand a word of it. It was bad enough doing the full mix, but for the dub we had to get in a translator to make sure what we'd done made sense, or wasn't really dirty or something. When we read the translations we weren't sure if they were right, they said something like "We go out to watch the moonlight and then go to get some chips together" – we can't remember them exactly. We thought we'd messed things up but apparently those were the original lyrics.

How often do you turn down remixes on purely artistic grounds?

We turn down as many remixes as we accept. It usually has to do with the vocals. Some type of vocals won't work, but you usually know where you are with divas.

What's the secret of staying popular?

Stay in touch and don't let things go to your head. Make sure you love the last thing you've done. Maintain a sound and continuity, but keep moving forward. Don't dilute the quality of your stuff for remixes. If anything, we have to work harder on remixes 'cos our productions go out on our own Sharp label and we're our own A&R people.

Any advice for budding remixers?

The most important thing is to know the music. There's no point doing a remix if you haven't been to a club in the last year, because you won't have a clue what's going on. That's where DJing and our radio show on Kiss come in handy: we get to see the reactions straight away. It's still the greatest rush in the world to do a mix on Thursday, get an acetate done on Friday and see people going mad when you play it out on Saturday.

How can a newcomer get remix work?

It helps if you've got a friend in A&R! A more helpful answer though, is to concentrate on making good tracks that you enjoy. That's how we got our break. • Alex Williams

The Sharp Boys have been as busy as ever lately – check out their *Sharp Tools Vol. 4 EP*, as well as *Metlife's* new single 'How Do You Feel', both out on Sharp

Check out these Sharp trax...

East Anglia 'Unmanageable'

"One of our earliest projects. It's 11 minutes long and five years on, it still gets a fantastic reaction when we play it."

Cool Jack 'Jus' Come'

"Our fifth Sharp release – it was an early Trade anthem that always blew the roof off. We were really shocked when it was licensed to AMPM and remixed by the likes of DJ Sneak in 1996."

Artful Dodger 'Rewind'

"The biggest 2-step record yet. We were very happy with our mix and had great feedback from the likes of Matt 'Jam' Lamont."

Freshmakka 'La La La'

"Forthcoming release on Tall Paul's label. We only had the words to play with – 'la la la' – but the result is currently going down big-time in the clubs."

Britney Spears 'Hit Me Baby'

"We were asked to remix this for America, before she'd ever released a single. We think it's one of the best pop records ever, and were playing our club mix at Trade six months before the track even got released in the UK."



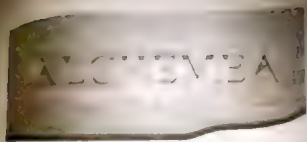
The Dreem Teem. That's also what we offer with our mixes – a cutting edge, Y2K lick that the mainstream desire to freshen up their occasionally middle-of-the-road, sometimes bland pop output."

Quite. Traditionally, dance and urban producers have held sway when it comes to jobs for remixers, simply because they provide the gateway into clubland and are, shall we say, less compositionally rounded than your average pop producer. The Dreem Teem are a case in point: Spoony, Timmy Magic and Mikey B have grown up around the club and sound system culture of inner-city London. They have an intrinsic understanding of polyrhythm, using keyboard and sampled sounds as percussive assistants to the essential rhythm. Thus it would be only natural that they would take a composition from, say, D'Influence's Kwame Kwaten – a fine all-round musician who discovered and produced Shola Ama's Dreem Teem-mixed 'Much Love' – and imbue it with the metaphorical legs to crossover into clubland. The irony here is that 'crossing over' used to be one-way traffic from club to radio – back in the day. Nowadays, it's just as essential to, quite literally, beat the inverse path.

"As radio people and club DJs, we understand the unique nature of modern demands," claims Spoony. "The record companies want a hot sound of the moment, and if you're in demand it can be a bit of a trap. The temptation for a young talented kid off the street is to remix everything he can get his hands on and make as much money as he can. However, it pays to be selective and think about what you're doing. We've become far more selective, simply because we don't want to overkill our sound, nor lose the spirit or essence of what we do and why we are doing it."

"My advice to any remixers would be to be careful with your quality control. Never do anything that is obvious, or anything that you feel you can't enhance. We like to think we can bring something new to the party, so when we did 'Buddy X' for Neneh Cherry we were selecting a song from an artist that no-one perceived as being from a garage subculture. That kind of thing appeals to us, rather than doing mere mixes of fellow garage artists. We've just done a mix on the old Prince classic 'Sometimes It Snows In April', for instance. The sound clash is interesting and entertaining."

"One thing I'd like to say about remixing: people should start to think about calling it 'reworking' or 'reproducing', because the days of simply adding a beat to someone else's work are long gone." • Jon Andre Holley



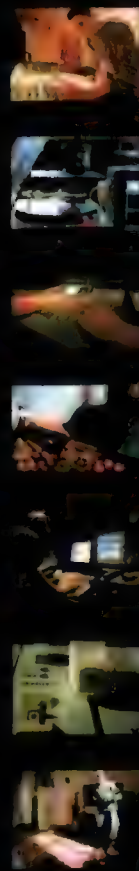
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187 Lockdown

Are today's leading remixers simply guns for hire? Who better to ask than Julian Jonah and Danny Harrison, creators of speed garage hit 'Gunman'

It's been nearly three years since Julian Jonah and Danny Harrison – a.k.a. 187 Lockdown – were first thrust into the public ear. Their hit 'Gunman' is credited by many with both creating and destroying the mainstream hype surrounding the speed garage scene. This chart success led to a hugely lucrative and high-profile remix career, seeing 187 Lockdown become the most sought-after remix team in the country.

The success was not without its pitfalls, however, and in the end it caused Jonah (left of photo) and Harrison to step back from the very scene they helped to popularise. The new millennium, therefore, finds the pair concentrating on their Stella Brown project, a return to the more US vocal house style that was their original influence.

Yet, for a time, 187 Lockdown were the most in-demand remixers around – their name guaranteeing huge sales. With all this experience, who better to guide us safely through the corporate minefield of professional remixing?

"I guess a remixer is someone who can add that special something to a track, without losing the whole vibe or magic of the original," proposes Julian. "It doesn't really take any special skills, aside from the usual production techniques. The only difference is that when we approach a remix, we try and create a different angle or take it to a different level in a way which the original didn't."

"Of course, there have been a few mixes we refused," he continues, "because, artistically, we couldn't add anything – especially if we weren't inspired by the original. Sometimes, we've been asked to remix tracks whose vocals we didn't like, or where we just thought the original was crap, so, of course, we turned them down."

Unfortunately, judging what will or won't work isn't always that easy – even for the experts. It will be a great reassurance to many a budding remixer that, even with a combined total of 20 years remixing experience, Julian and Danny sometimes get it wrong: "There have been a few remixes we just gave up on," confesses Julian. "Sometimes we knew after five minutes in the studio, but we have been known to keep trying for days before giving up. Obviously, the more remixes you do, the more relaxed your approach becomes, and the easier things get."

The nature of remixing, however, is such that relaxation can be difficult. When producing one's own tracks, one works at one's own pace, whereas with remixes there is a deadline imposed by the commissioning label. Prolonged exposure to such label pressure has created in Julian and Danny what many will consider an enlightened philosophy: "You shouldn't stem creativity," says Julian. "We never work to deadlines; if they can't wait, fuck 'em!"

With such pressures facing the remixer, it's a wonder that so many of us actually crave these restrictive label commitments. However, for those that do, Julian and Danny have some useful advice on producing killer mixes and dealing with unsympathetic record companies: "The key to successful remixing depends on how you as an individual perceive the track. It's important to remember that there are no set patterns to follow. The way we see it is that if someone hires you, they should be hiring you because they want you to put your rub on it. When a label turns around and says, 'Well, we were hoping you would do this, and do that,' it defeats the whole object."

In a remixer's paradise, this would be the deciding argument, but the harsh reality is that labels don't commission remixes for the purposes of artistic sponsorship. They do it to sell more records. When a label hands over a cheque for £15,000 to the remixer, they are buying the name and reputation, as much as the talent. They are buying a specific sound – one that has succeeded before; one that will hopefully succeed again. They aren't paying the remixer to experiment. This constraint was certainly a deciding factor when, at the height of their popularity, Julian and Danny stopped doing 187 Lockdown remixes.

Nevertheless, they remain characteristically philosophical: "There are good and bad points to remixing," concludes Julian. "One of the best things is obviously the money. The money can be good – if you're hot, extremely good. Also, there may be a track that you're really into, which obviously gives you a chance to dissect it and basically have a bit of fun. It was like that with a 187 Lockdown mix of Marvin Gaye's 'What's Going On' that we did. That was our all-time favourite remix, but sadly it was never released. Unfortunately, there's no way around the main problem with remixing tracks – namely, you work really hard and give all your ideas away on songs that someone else is getting credit for."

It seems clear that this, above all else, represents the biggest pitfall facing the remixer today. In these days of remixes on the A-side, and the remixer as artist, the once obvious lines between remix and track are becoming increasingly blurred, and the coming years will see much debate on this subject.

For Julian and Danny, though, things couldn't be clearer: "It's simple: when we do a remix, we're re-writing someone else's song for them – without getting any writing credit or publishing rights!"

• Alex Williams

The follow-up to Stella Brown's eponymous debut single will be out sometime in August on Perfecto

Full Intention

Key to this house remix team's method is a studio in a house. That, and trying every musical combination possible!

Remix producers Mike Gray and Jon Pearn, collectively known as Full Intention, are no spring chickens when it comes to remixing, and are respected by leading DJs like Danny Rampling, Roger Sanchez, David Morales, Erick Morillo and Masters At Work. Some may be surprised to know that they've remixed 'To Be In Love' by Masters At Work, 'What you Need' by Powerhouse (featuring Duane Harding), 'It's All Good' by Da Mob & Jocelyn Brown, 'Tears' by Frankie Knuckles and 'I Want You For Myself' by Another Level. There's no doubt that Full Intention have maintained their status as one of the foremost house remix teams outside the US.

Their purpose-built, soundproofed studio is within Mike's house, situated in a beautiful quiet country village just off the M25. He bought the house in 1993 – by which time he had already been working with Jon (left of photo) for four years, having crafted a number of disco cut-ups long before it was trendy – and converted the snooker room into a studio to save the daily trek to London. The huge window overlooking Mike's manicured garden also serves as inspiration.

Full Intention have to work smart in order to meet demand for their remixes. "It started working for us when we

organised ourselves even down to roughly where we sit – talk about routine! It helps us be objective and doesn't stem the flow of ideas. We both engineer, but we have different roles in the studio."

How has their approach to remixes changed over the years? "We don't think it has," Mike playfully retorts. "We always start out to do soulful vocal house records, incorporating the various trends in production that come and go."

Remixes can take Full Intention up to a week. If, however, as on most projects, they use live string and horn sections, it can be anything up to two weeks. These guys never compromise quality. If a song needs live strings, they go to RG Jones in Wimbledon to record. Horn sections are occasionally recorded elsewhere, but all the mixdowns are done in their own studio.

Full Intention's first remix was Duke's 'So In Love With You', which achieved a Top 20 chart placing. They have just finished remixing Dina Carol's 'You've Never Been Loved Before' for Manifesto. But do they turn many remixes down? Mike's reply is something of an eye-opener: "We turn down probably nine out of ten remixes," he claims. "We will only accept a mix if it has a strong vocal hook to work around. Some of the tracks we are offered don't need remixing or they're too close to our style to

warrant the treatment."

That said, remixing accounts for up 30% of Full Intention's time. What tips, therefore, can they offer remixers? "You don't have to ditch all the original parts and just keep the vocal," says Mike. "If there are some good strings, horns or keyboard parts then try and use them as well. Either enhance a track or make it stronger or completely start again. Don't think because you have booked an expensive studio with a big sound system your remix is going to sound pumping elsewhere. Most of our monitoring is done on NS10s!"

"And make sure the studio you use is acoustically correct," chips in Jon. "Mike will always check the finished mix in his car. That is the second studio!"

As far as the competition is concerned, favourite respected remixers include Jazz 'n' Groove, Knee Deep and David Morales.

So how do Full Intention approach a remix? "We usually start with Jon putting the vocals and any music parts we wish to keep into the Mac," begins Mike. Jon continues: "Then Mike works out ideas that have been whirling around in his head the night before and starts looking through his old record collection! If the vocals are too slow or fast then we will time-stretch them in the Mac to around 126 bpm."

At that stage in the remix, Full Intention use the kick drum from their trusty 909 to sync up the vocals and any other parts that they are going to use. Once all the parts are in time, they work on the drums: "We keep a vast collection of kicks, snares, claps and other drum sounds on a hard drive in the sampler, and these will all be auditioned, one by one, until the drums sound right, and the groove is the same as the other parts in the mix," reveals Jon.

Mike then plays or hums his ideas to the

Essential Intention trax



Another Level 'I Want You For Myself'

"This track started out as a ballad at around 64 bpm. We managed to double the tempo and create a new track around the vocal at 128 bpm. Having the group sing to our version on *Blue Peter* was a real highlight. We didn't think our mixes were *Blue Peter* material!"



Salsoul Orchestra 'Love Break'

"Getting our hands on such a cool multitrack was the bomb!"



Powerhouse 'I Got What You Need'

"...because of the energy and drive."



Ultra Nate 'Found A Cure'

"The string arrangement turned out well on that one."



Masters At Work 'To Be In Love'

"This one is just such a good song – classic Vince Montana."

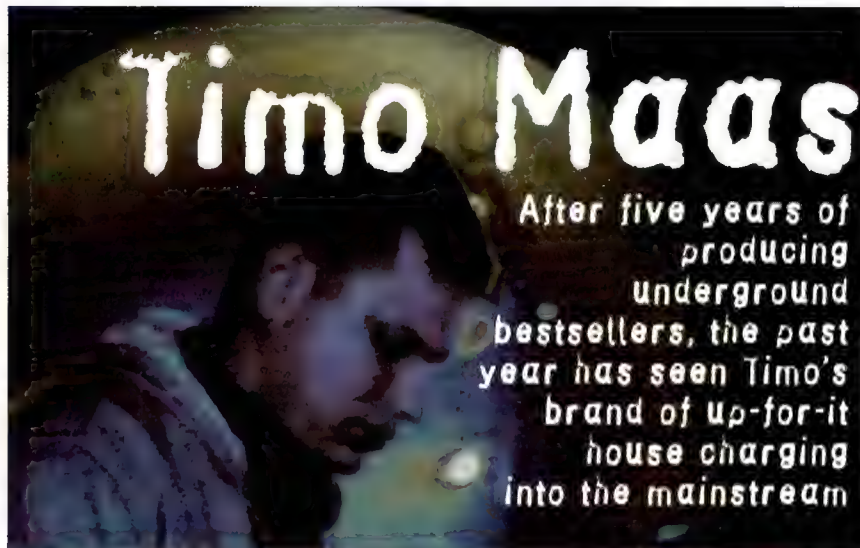
classically-trained Jon, who then works on the chords: "I play in all the keyboard riffs and chord patterns," Jon confirms. "Mike makes the objective decisions – which riff and sounds to use. I concentrate on playing. We both decide what works best in the groove to fine-tune it."

Mike then works the desk, EQ'ing everything into one solid musical groove. They both share percussion and programming duties, though Jon operates the samplers: "Although we can, the worst thing we can do is try to do each other's jobs," he says. "We know our limitations, so we get David Snell to do the mixdown of vocals and live strings as neither of us is so hot on compression."

Mike grins, "I'm a fussy git; I have to be on my own when I'm arranging, because it would probably make a musician like Jon cringe!" "Mike will try every possible combination, as he's so fussy," agrees Jon. "I don't have the patience for that. Then again, when I come in the next day, he'll have tried everything and it'll be spot-on."

Music lovers wouldn't expect anything less from Full Intention. • *Mark Moore*

Full Intention's 'Everybody Loves the Sunshine', with mixes from Knee Deep and a new dub from Full Intention, is out July 21 on Dtsion



Timo Maas

After five years of producing underground bestsellers, the past year has seen Timo's brand of up-for-it house charging into the mainstream

Germany has a curious knack for exporting incredibly talented producers and Timo Maas is no exception. Whether producing, remixing or DJing, Timo adds his distinctive twist to everything he does, and since his first remix, Montana Experience's 'Astrosyn' on Phoenix Rising in 1996, he has risen to become the most sought-after remixer in his field.

We asked Timo how you go about becoming a successful remixer and why things never seem to get any easier for him... "I see each new remix or production as part of a learning experience," he explains. "I and the producers I work with invest a great deal of time in remixes, as much as with our own tracks. We are always trying to do something different. Naturally, when you approach things in this way, it doesn't matter how many mixes you've done – things don't get any easier, but that's okay because the buzz of completing each new remix also stays the same." Timo believes this continued innovation and attention to detail is the key to carving out a career as a top remixer. After all, when you are first offered remix work, it is almost invariably on the basis of tracks you have produced, so it seems obvious that you should extend the same attention to your remixes.

There are, of course, certain differences you must bear in mind: "A good remixer has to strike a balance. It's important to retain the feel of the original track in some way while still stamping your mark or style onto it" This, believes Timo, is both the essence and the beauty of remixing. "That's what's so great about it – taking a track you really like and putting your spin on it. The only drawback, really, is that you can find yourself giving away all your ideas."

Putting your own spin on a track is without a doubt the name of the game, but how much should you make something your own? "The thing to remember is to treat a track with respect. This is even more important for me nowadays, as I'm getting the chance to remix some astounding music, but it still has to be recognisable as a Timo Maas mix. That's the art in it. On some tracks we use a great deal of the original, while on others like 'Azzido Da Bass' we only used one sound." Again, the key, believes Timo, is to imagine you're making a track of your own, using elements or discarding them as befits the track.

Another important thing in Timo's mind is to choose your tracks carefully: "We often have to turn things down. We get offered so much stuff, but however big or famous an artist is, if there's no vibe to the original, then there's not much we can do with it. The projects we do take on though, we take very seriously. Even when remixes aren't going well, and things just aren't coming together easily, we never quit. We never start something we can't finish, however long it takes." It is for this reason that he refuses to work to deadlines: "I'd rather take my time to make it perfect. Sometimes that means a label will have to wait, but I can't have something leaving the studio that my producers and I aren't happy with."

Timo cannot easily say which remixes he's most proud of: "It's hard to say. Partly because I've done so many, but mostly because each new mix is part of a progression and learning curve and I find that your favourite track or remix often tends to be the last one you've done."

It is clear that Timo Maas doesn't distinguish a great deal artistically between his remix and his production work, being equally proud of both. This, perhaps, is his secret. By taking on only remix projects he feels share a certain vibe, he can concentrate on creating new tracks from elements of the originals as if they were his. It is certainly worth noting that the remixers he respects the most, notably Deep Dish and Dimitri, are known for making remixes very much their own. Essentially though, Timo knows that the surest way of securing remix work is by producing quality material of your own, and that the surest way of maintaining that work is to treat each new remix as a challenge. • *Alex Williams*

Music for the Maases, a double mix compilation of Timo's best remixes and original productions, is out 4 September on Hope Recordings

top 'Maasive' tunes...

Paganini Trax 'Zoe'
Der Schieber 'Funkin' for
Hope in NY Mix
Azzido Da Bass 'Dooms
Night'
Green Velvet 'Flash'
Big Ron 'Let the Freak'



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22nd June 2000

Artful Dodger

Meet the duo whose remix of 'Re-Rewind' catapulted them onto the forefront of the UK garage scene

"The bottom line with remixing these days is that basically you are taking someone else's composition and mixing some of your own 'flavour' into the music," comments Pete Devereux, one half of hot Southampton duo Artful Dodger, along with Mark Hill. The remix team with the Dickensian moniker freely admit to remixing anything "we like or feel we can do an interesting job on."

"We put other people's music into a UK garage context," Pete (below) continues. "That is why they come to us – not because we can make a hard, banging house record, or a trance track. They'll go to Sash for that, or Van Dyk. What we do is smoother and warmer, with a two-step rhythm structure."

We know our trademark sound and create within these parameters. There's no point in asking Morales to do a hip hop mix or Gangstarr to do a disco mix."

Absolutely. Like anyone else, Artful Dodger would still like to be played by Tongy or Rampling, as well as the Droom Team and EZ – in an ideal world. So what do they do? They cross-reference their music with other styles. That's the name of the game when it comes to the remix culture, and you can either call it a marketing sellout, or take the attitude that these cross-relationships are good for music.

"With this in mind, the only thing we would say is that obviously a track has to have the sort of musicality or structure, or even feel, that lends itself to garage," asserts Pete. "Thus, we have done things by Gabrielle, Sisqo – 'Thong Song' – Angel Lee, and other urban and garage acts, more than anything too far removed from what we do – quite simply because we feel we can do it more justice, and the crowd that are into these artists will be more in tune with what we have to offer."

The most unique thing about Artful Dodger's case study is their success with remixing their own number 'Re-Rewind'. The song has introduced the world to 18-year-old boy-most-likely, soulful singer Craig David, and put UK garage on the world map in a serious way. The whole r'n'b blended uptempo sound looks set to crack the all-important US market shortly, as it is tailor made for the post-Puffy, post-Timbaland generation desperately seeking a new lease of musical life.

"The bottom line here is that 'Rewind' stripped down is an r'n'b ballad," declares Pete. "It's accessible, radio-friendly and essentially a nice tune. In a way, we worked it twice; firstly, building something of dance quality into a ballad, and then adding key garage club phrases and buzz words like 'bo selector' and 'rewind' to imbue the piece with a sense of timing and history."

Indeed, all great dance music leaves its date signature on the mix. The Bee Gees' 'Staying Alive' was all flares and disco kitsch, whilst Jolly Rodger's 'We Call It Acieed' will always be quintessentially associated with the acid house boom of the early '90s. Ditto the Hacienda anthem 'Carino' by T-Coy, and try

associating NWA's 'Fuck Tha Police' or Public Enemy's 'Rebel Without A Pause' with anything but their respective West Coast and East Coast hip hop protestations.

In fact, the 'Rewind' single raises another interesting point about remixing: "The Sharp Boys' mix was tough and funky, with a great disco house sound that we couldn't have managed to achieve. We don't go to Gatecrasher enough to know the sound and The Sharp Boys' mix – for what it was – was fantastic and perfect for covering that particular market. It's all about covering the markets, without losing musical integrity. Take Romina Johnson's new single; Pussy 2000 have done a similarly-aimed house mix, which is awesome. It's the name of the game these days." Especially for a right pair of Artful Dodgers! • Jan Andre Holley

Artful Dodger's new single 'Woman Trouble' is released on June 26 on Ffr/London

REMIX!

Howie B

After a decade at the vanguard of the remix/dance scene, this laid-back Scotsman's work continues to be innovative, unique and infectious

The term 'chilled' was probably first coined by someone who'd recently been in the presence of remix guru/producer Howie B – a.k.a. Howard Bernstein. Fusing elements of hip-hop, jazz, house and funk, he has worked with such diverse talents as U2, Bjork, Ry Cooder, Sly & Robbie and Soul II Soul. And with his laid-back but thoroughly professional approach to both life and work – coupled with his vast wealth of experience as producer/remixer/artist – it's no real surprise that he has some sage advice for wannabe remixers seeking to turn their 'art' into a going concern.

"You really don't 'get into' professional remixing... it's more that you're asked to enter into it," Howie muses. "I guess one good way is to make a record that people like – or a noise that someone likes and wants on their record. It's not about making a name for yourself, it's more about making a sound for yourself!"

Assuming then that we're poised to approach our chosen track for remix, what would be the preferred method of attack? "No compromise... you have to please yourself! With me I usually decide whether a remix is going to be for the club or the bedroom. If it's for a club then my rule is that it has to get me moving. If I don't move with it then no one else will either!"

So any favoured style of tune to remix? "I try not to give myself any rules and I think that's why I do so many different sorts of remixes. I don't limit myself to any one genre of music. I'm open

Paul Janes

The road to success may not always be paved with gold, but the rewards have been high for this hard house remixer

"There's definitely a special skill to remixing," maintains Paul Janes. "Remixers these days create a whole new track, putting in as much thought and work as with one of their own."

And he should know. As part of the Tidy Trax collective, and under such pseudonyms as UK Gold, Paul has produced many of clubland's top-selling remixes, including the enormously successful *Untidy Dub* series. Having left Tidy, this year sees him joining forces with hard house producer Paul King to set up Overdose Records.

The Mix disrupted Paul's busy schedule to discover the secrets of good remixing: "I approach a remix the same way as a track," he explains. "I begin with rhythm and bass, then add the samples I want from the original, and finally my own bits. If I'm very lucky, I'll get all the elements I want to use, but this often isn't the case. There have been plenty of times I've asked for a sound from the original only to be told they haven't got it anymore!"

Paul believes innovation is the key to success: "Just because no-one else is doing something doesn't mean you shouldn't. There was a Berri track I remixed which had no harmonies, so I pitch-shifted the original vocal, creating male-sounding harmonies from the female lead line. The trick is in making something suit your style. Most vocals have lots of chord changes and movement, but that doesn't suit the club-orientated stuff I make. Consequently, there's a lot of time spent chopping up

vocals and pitch-shifting them word by word!"

He also describes the importance of an open-mind: "If the A&R people want another eight bars – do it. After all, it's their product and they've got to sell it." That's not to say, of course, that A&R always get things right: "One guy I know had a remix returned with a request for louder vocals. He sent the track back, unchanged, and they said, 'Great – thanks!' Once I told a label a remix wouldn't work the way they wanted, and they asked me to do it anyway. So I did, and they said 'Yes, we see what you mean.' You have to see the funny side."

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Paul espouses the virtues of deadlines: "If I've given myself three days to do a mix, and I've spent three days on it, I try and wrap it up," he says. "You'll carry on adding things forever, otherwise. The key is in the arrangement – you can just feel when something's finished."

Sound advice. But perhaps the hardest part of remixing is actually getting commissions in the first place. Paul's suggestion is to concentrate on making quality tracks of your own: "People liked the stuff I was doing, and asked me to do remixes. I also used to do stuff for the DMC series of DJ-only releases, which was good experience, because I could just choose any vocal I wanted and remix it."

"My first actual commercial remix was Baby D's 'Casanova' in 1994, on Production House Records," Paul continues, "but the one that really



samples!

tracks 13-17

On the cover CD: Paul shares a bunch of top loops, synths and sounds with *The Mix* readers...

to everything - I just love good music."

Perhaps surprisingly, the main thing that attracts Howie to any potential track is nothing more cutting-edge than good old-fashioned 'hooks'. And if he can't find something to fire him in a track then he simply can't do it. "Anything can fire me - from a melody or hi-hat pattern, even to the compression they use on the bass. But there has to be a trigger, otherwise I won't take it on."

Such quality control and high standards are refreshing amidst the constant stream of souls being sold to the highest corporate bidder. So no doubt he despairs at the plethora of remixers and DJ's currently vying for the limelight?

"Not at all," comes the unanticipated response. "If I hear a shit mix then it just inspires me to go and do something better. It's like when people say that there's too much music - fuck off! There can never be too much. Thank God people are making so much music. The bad creates the good. If I hear something shit on the radio then that's the biggest inspiration for me ever... I run straight into the studio and make a great song."

But now we cut to the chase. In an attempt to unravel the many wonders of a Howie B remix it would help if we were privy to what essential equipment and studio trickery is employed in an average session? "My essential bit of kit is me! Other than that, an Akai sampler, a record deck, a sequencer, a reverb unit and a delay. I normally have more, but I can function quite happily with just that."

Again one might assume (wrongly as it transpires) that Mr Bernstein will be using nowt but state-of-the-art sequencing tools in order to create that perfect remix. However, finding that he's still running C-Lab sequencing from a trusty old Atari 1040 perhaps goes to illustrate that, in some circles at least, the idea is still as important as the technology. "I've been using the same gear for quite a while now and I've no problems with it at all. It does everything I want it to do and everything I can imagine. All the ideas I have I can carry out with that."

There are some instances though, when even Howie's imagination isn't enough. Like the time he was asked to remix a track by famed New York avant-garde composer Steve Reich. Flattered, he asked for the tapes to his favourite track from the album, only to be told that they thought he would sample and

remix from the master. Unsure of which version had finally been used on the album, 47 different versions of the same track were duly despatched. Howie then spent three days sifting through the different takes for the one he had originally liked! Food for thought if you think the remixer's life consists solely of 'recreational' cigarettes and perpetual leisure! As with more conventional forms of occupation, the harder you work at it, the richer the rewards.

A recent remix for K.D. Lang looked to be heading for problems, much to Howie's chagrin. "I thought it was wicked, but I think she was a wee bit upset as I'd changed some stuff and time-stretched her vocal. Two weeks later I got a call saying she loved it. I think she'd gone out for a drink then played it really loud and heard it for the first time without listening to it under a microscope!"

Not imposing too many steadfast rules on the way you work seems an equally important part of the 'successful remix' equation. "The only rule I've got is that if there's a voice involved, don't bring it in before 40 seconds. It's also good to imagine you're in a club listening to it. What would you like to be going on in it? It's down to personal taste - that's my guide to everything, really!" You could do a lot worse than follow his example. • *Hamish Mackintosh*

Howie B's new Pussytoons compilation is out on his own Pussyfoot label on 1 July

Howie B chooses his own faves

London Posse 'Jump Around'

"I did this one way back in '89 and I loved it because it made a massive noise hip hop-wise here in Britain. It was a departure for hip hop, as we sped it up."

Gavin Friday 'Angel'

"I swapped the 'one' halfway through the song. It goes 1.2.3.4...1.2.3.4 then 2.3.4.1. It's fucked up, but it really works on the dancefloor."

Leftfield 'Dusted'

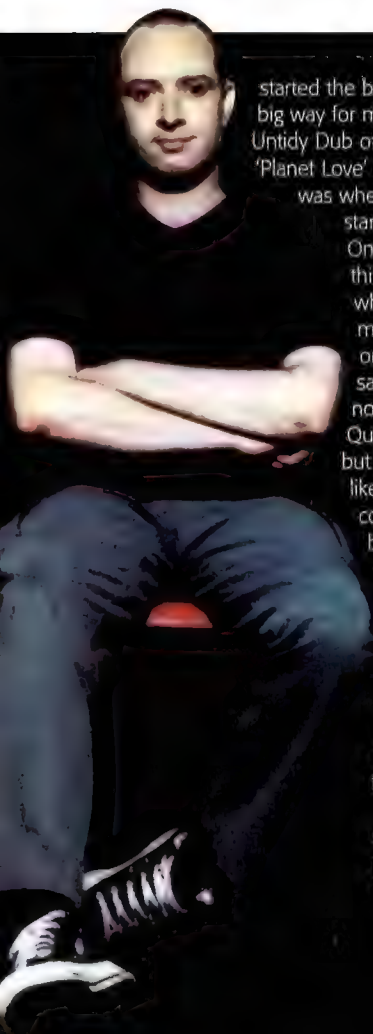
"I did an instrumental mix completely different from the vocal mix, but I loved them both."

Boom Boom Satellites 'Push Eject'

"I halved the tempo to 70 bpm and made it into this crazy, hard hip hop tune."

Uncle 'Our Time Has Come'

"A great mix I did with James Lavelle for the Mo'Wax/Uncle project."



started the ball rolling in a big way for me was the Untidy Dub of DJ Quicksilver's 'Planet Love' on Positiva. It was when Judge Jules started doing Radio One, but I don't think he knew who'd done the mix. He played it on the radio, saying he didn't normally like DJ Quicksilver's stuff, but that he quite liked this. Of course, it then became apparent that it wasn't DJ Quicksilver at all, and I started getting loads of remix work. Unfortunately, it soon began to take over."

It's easy to see why. Most producers only have a few

releases out at any one time, but they can have any number of remixes. The revenue from remix work also provides immediate dividends: "Yes, the money is good," concedes Paul, "but there are other advantages, too. Doing remix work disciplines you, gets you used to working efficiently and gives you studio experience for your own productions. You find that when doing your own stuff the production takes care of itself. When I first started it took weeks to do a track. Now I plan them in my head and just work on them from start to finish."

Of course, as the number of remixes increases, so too does the likelihood of being offered less than fantastic tracks. Surprisingly, however, Paul doesn't often turn down remixes on artistic grounds: "I find that if someone is willing to pay the asking price, they usually have a half-decent product to sell. Having said that, sometimes you do get a load of crap, and you know that they're basically paying you to write an A-side for them. A brilliant example of this is Tori Amos' 'Professional Widow'. That was essentially Armand Van Helden's track, but he never got a mention on the radio or TV when it was played. It's fair enough if they're using your name as a remixer to sell records, but it's a bit criminal when you get no credit for a track that you've basically made from scratch. I know -

it's happened to me."

So, you're in demand; the phone is ringing off the hook. How do you maintain your new-found success? Paul offers cautious counsel: "To be honest, apart from the odd exceptions to the rule, like the Sharp Boys, whose stuff just stays in demand, as a top-flight remixer, you should expect to have a shelf life of about six months. There will be a year before and after when you're still really busy, but that six months will be the peak. It's also very hard work, and you should only do it if you're willing to completely commit."

Paul's parting tip is this: "Don't rely on other people doing anything for you. By all means work with other people, but if you can do it on your own, then you're pretty much set - whatever happens. The trick is to take the experience, and the money, and then concentrate on doing your own thing."

• *Alex Williams*

Paul recommends...

DJ Quicksilver 'Planet Love' (Untidy Dub)
Dusk 'Til Dawn 'Fine Night' (Untidy Dub)
Dye Witness 'What Would You Like To Hear Again?' (Ian M Remix)
Hyperlogic 'U Got The Love' (Red Hand Gang Remix)
Bed & Bondage 'Don't Take The Mick' (House Rockers Remix)

REMIX!

A dozen steps to remix heaven

To become skilled at anything, you need some kind of a procedure – so we asked Alan Branch, one of London's finest engineers to think long and hard and put down his tried and tested steps to a great remix...

Remixing can be a real challenge: at times *carte blanche* to turn a perfectly ordinary track into a club-pounding monster, at others a fine art in choosing and editing the right parts to complement a completely new version of a song, and at others a way for record companies to get you to produce and write a single for next to nothing, the cheeky devils!

There are dance remixes, club remixes, noise remixes... it all depends on what angle the record company or artist want to take. But while each track is different, this is my general approach to remixing, which I've used on everything from R&B club mixes to way-out dub-style mixes with my partner in musical crime Adrian Sherwood.

Alan Branch

With past clients including the likes of Lee 'Scratch' Perry and Dub Syndicate, it's not hard to guess what London's On U Sound production team are renowned for – and they've put that sound to work on countless remixes. As the team engineer, Alan's many remix projects include tracks for Primal Scream, Nine Inch Nails, Depeche Mode, The Cure, Simply Red, Living Colour, Death in Vegas, De La Soul, Lighthouse Family, Eternal, Shola Ama, Beverly Knight and KC and JoJo.

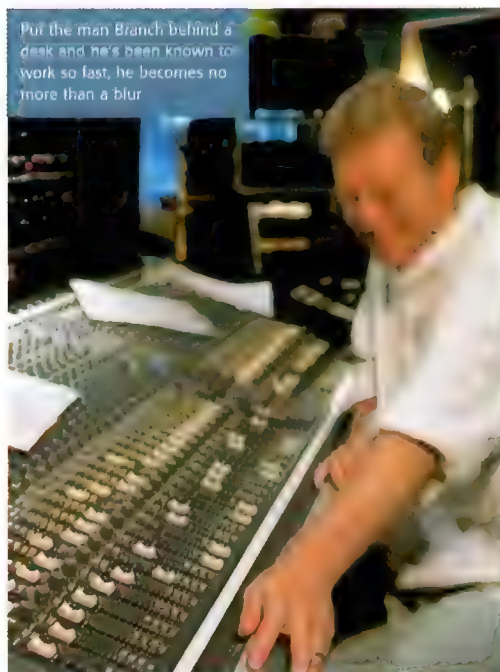


Alan, left, with On U producer Adrian Sherwood

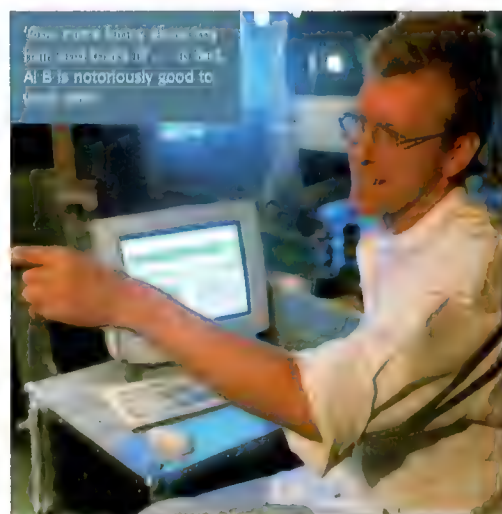
1: Listen and decide

When the remix is offered we get a brief on what the artist and label want from it and a copy of the track. We'll only take the track on if (a) we like it and (b) we think we have some good ideas. Communication with the artist is essential at this point so as to keep the vibe and essence of the original track while at the same time deciding on the style and direction of the remix.

It's important to listen through the song and pick out all the key elements. Identifying these will keep your mix in tune with the original song rather than just being a beat with some samples tacked on. Playing the track before we start work in the studio usually gives a few ideas about what parts we can and can't use. And at this point we'll make arrangements for any session musicians or extra singers.



Put the man Branch behind a desk and he's been known to work so fast, he becomes no more than a blur



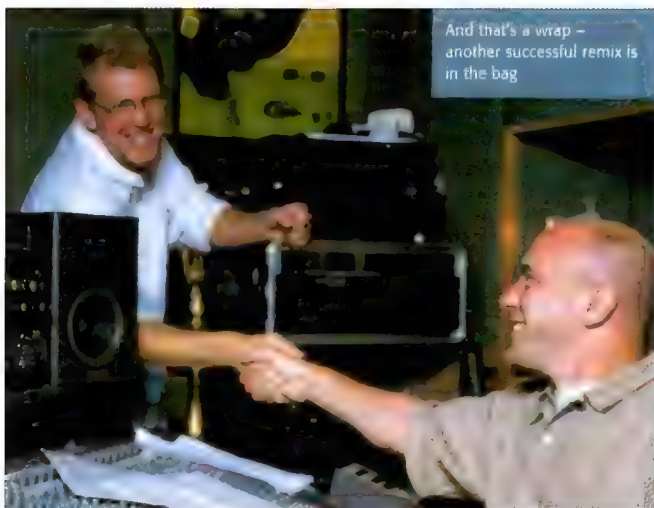
2: Keep and delete

The track is either provided on an analogue multitrack or individual parts run onto DAT. If the artist is really organized you get the parts on CD ROM, which makes sampling a lot easier! Which parts we use depends on how close to the original the mix is going to be. Sometimes we keep nothing but the vocal and sometimes we use nearly the whole song.

Using Logic Audio I record all the parts we need and delete the rest. We start by taking these into Logic while in sync with the multitrack, or if on DAT, parts are sometimes supplied with timecode on the left side and audio on the right, or vice-versa. If there is no code, then we just sample the parts.

Sampling in sync with the original song can establish a rough arrangement of all the parts that we want, which will all be tied together.

If we are just straight sampling, then we fly them in by hand, placing them in time with our new beats. With certain mixes we will put individual parts (like guitars, brass and backing vocals) in a sampler – usually Sample Cell – so we can play them in where we like.



3: Choose your tempo

If we've decided to alter the speed of the track, now is when we start time-stretching. Sonic Foundry's Acid is a useful tool to help decide the finished tempo, as a vocal can be stretched in real time while trying out different beats and groove samples. For finished quality time-stretching, Wavelab 3 or Logic is used for the final processing.

When a lot of samples are to be time-stretched, using the batch processing function in Wavelab is best. When you know the original tempo and the new chosen tempo, just select all the samples and set up the time-stretch process, then have lunch while the computer does the hard work for you.

4: Get into the groove

Once we've built our groove – with some programmed beats and maybe some loops – and we have an appropriate beat rolling, we drop in the vocal to check it's all going to tie in timing-wise. Now we can move on to the bassline!

5. Bass in yer face

As the bassline is what the remix is going to sit on, a firm foundation is very important. We'll play through a few lines that complement the parts from the original – either from a live bass, synth or samples – and find lines for each section. The bass can determine the feel and pace of the track: sometimes we fill a section (say, a chorus) with a fast busy bassline then suddenly drop it back going into the verse by half-timing the notes. Whether the bassline should be mellow or in-ya-face, super-subsonic or wildly distorted depends on the track – it will determine the sound the remix will have. Whatever happens, we try and keep it as fat as possible! At this point we're still keeping the arrangement loose so editing can be done right up to the last moment.

6: Sounds unlimited

I usually load up a selection of beats and noises into my sampler so I can change and add all the time, even right into the mix. Then I concentrate on the nitty gritty of the song, laying out and tidying up all the original audio parts within Logic's Arrange page and seeing if any processing with plug-ins or outboard effects is needed to add that extra 'something'. I'll try anything, from disguising the vocal with a ring modulator to phasing the piano – a new and original sound can create a vital hook line for the remix, as well as putting your own unique sonic stamp on a track. Experimentation is where it's at for me, so I'm always searching for new sounds and some 'not heard before' processing. This can be quite a timewaster though, and storing samples can become like stamp collecting...

7: Chop em out!

We're never scared to ditch a bridge or middle eight to make our version of the song work – after all, we are talking about a remix. So at this point we chop out all the dead wood and make a sensible (or radical) rough arrangement of the song sections. After this we have a basic track that's

been extended and arranged with a groove and bass line and some of the original samples flown in where we want them.

8: Bring on the extras

Now we may start recording some new parts like vocal harmonies, brass, sequenced keyboards or whatever is required to build a proper remix, depending on what the artist/label wants.

9: Oh, by the way...

We usually discover great additions to our tracks by accident: when we hear something we like we'll keep it to use as an intro or an edit section. Usually we split the work up into pre-production, and then recording and mixing but always keeping things as flexible as possible so the arrangement can be changed or parts replaced. Even after completing the mix it may not be finished because we mix down a master and then a couple of dub mixes.

10: Fix it in the mix

Okay, we've got the recording done, all the individual parts and samples are in the right places, and now it's time for mixing – time to knuckle down and let our imaginations run wild. Like a kind of ongoing filter we keep the track evolving, turning the good bits into great bits.

With a good mix all the sections should tie together, and in the majority of cases the vocals are the most important part. I won't whittle on about mixing here, but however and wherever you are doing it, keep it exciting and make sure it's going to work sonically in a club, the radio or wherever it's going to be played. Whether you're going for a polished or a raw sound, use some CDs for comparison – that will give an idea of how bright it is or how much bass you want pumping, and you'll have a better chance of getting a good result.

11: Close to the edit and off to the party

We run the mixes into a Sadie system or Pro Tools and listen through to see if we can chop in any good bits from the dubs. We may even chop the dubs into an extra version of the track so we can give the record company and artist a couple of choices (like a safe mix and a few outrageous ones).

12: And remember...

Keep it radical and new, and hopefully yours will be the remix people are wanting to hear.

Remixing Nine Inch Nails...

"More extremities and more noise." That was the brief given to the On U team when they were hired to remix a Nine Inch Nails track last month. Programmer Simon Munday takes us through the NIN sessions...

"The Nine Inch Nails track 'Startucker' arrived on six reels of 2" tape. So the first thing I did was transfer this in real-time (no pun intended) into Logic, giving me something like 120+ tracks.

"Next I sifted through the parts and located all the stereo pairs, which I linked in Sonic Foundry's Sound Forge.

"There were also a lot of 'things' (sound effects and the like) that only happened once in the whole piece, so most of these could share the same tracks in Logic, using automation to keep them level in terms of volume.

"Once this was done, I spent a day or two acquainting myself with the song and all its parts, deciding what was to be kept. There were a lot of guitar parts played about the arrange page; so some comping, grouping parts together, and colour-coding was in order.

"It's also worth pointing out that Adrian [Sherwood] is a keen exponent of mixing from tape, as tape doesn't

crash. As the recorder has only 24 tracks, the tracks were sub-mixed then bounced onto tape.

"Once the verses and choruses had been identified, the next step was to select some interesting beats and loops. Sonic Foundry to the rescue again: Acid is perfect for trying things out on the fly and for batch processing. Also at this stage I decided to use Sound Forge for some added sonic mayhem.

"Once this had been done (with the aid of fellow collaborator Mark Stewart) everything was imported into Logic for arranging. In this instance, after trying out different arrangements, we went for a bit of an acid house vibe and chopped up the guitars to create something that complemented it. Trent Reznor has frequently cited Mark as a major inspiration behind his band, so Mark wrote a new vocal part for the track.

"The next stage was to take it into the studio for some final tweaks, and start printing to tape. But there's always room for a few one-shots and effects for different passes that will run from the computer. Then Adrian and I got on the desk and started mixing; I headed to the chemist for some paracetamol!"

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Tidy Trax results

The winner of our Tidy Trax Remix Competition from issue 71 was announced last month, but we at *The Mix* and the boys at Tidy Trax have ensured that everyone gets some feedback on their entries, with the top ten getting some personal words of praise from none other than Mr Tidy Trax himself, Andy Pickles. "The standard of the entries was superb," says Andy. "We had a very difficult job in choosing a winner, but after two long car journeys enroute to gigs with the sound system pumpin' the decision has been made." And the winner is...

The Hi-jackers remix by Paul Clifton

We chose this mix because it was on a totally different vibe to the original and worked very well with the other mixes we had already commissioned for the release. A lot of the mixes submitted were very good, but a bit too similar to the original, and with a remix package you have got to give as many different flavours as possible. Also the production was of a very high standard from Paul, with great use of filters and a fantastic arrangement.

And let's hear it for the best of the rest...

2. Dark Horse mix

This is a more played-down affair based around a solid groove and wicked rolling bass line. They haven't gone over the top with too many parts – often the secret of a good track is what you leave out, not how much you can put in. This is a superb production and was very nearly the winner. It has a dark moody feel to it, with just the right ingredients and again it was on a totally different tip to the original. A very close second - good work, gentlemen.

3. Brian McCormick

An excellent mix from Brian, great production skills and very well thought-out. He has given the track a good crossover appeal and I'm sure this version would get plays in the more commercial venues. The hook he has written is very infectious if a tad light for Tidy Trax, but all the same it's a very well thought-out mix.

4. Tuff Clubs Blasted mix

A bit of a thumper, with solid percussion and a sequenced bassline. There are a lot of good elements to this mix, although the overall production needs to be a little tighter - a harder kick, better compression.

Because it's a very kick and bass-driven mix it's crucial that the relationship between the two are bang-on. Excellent effort though.

5. Check 'n' C

If we were to run a chillout mix of 'Do it Now' this would be the one. Obviously one of the main criteria for the mix was that it had to be right for Tidy Trax, and this mix is a good example of one which is a million miles away – but it was a great production with an excellent chilled-out vibe to it so I thought it deserved a mention. Lovely for a Monday morning after a weekend of thumping beats!

6. One Eyed Jack remix

Very good all-round mix, with good percussion, good top lines and a little touch of the ol' Juno 2 hoover in there for good measure. The mix combines the best elements of the original and takes it a stage further with new riffs and samples and the obligatory siren or two. Lovely.

7. DJ Goku's Tidiest Trax in the Land mix

If you like the original mix then you'll like this mix as it gives it a bit of a facelift. All the essential ingredients are here, but with a slightly different twist. An all-round good hard house bouncer, plus the CD-R he sent it in on had a lovely bit of artwork.

8. Rek & Ruin remix

This mix takes on a more industrial, hard trance approach. The production and programming are very well-executed with excellent keyboard work creating a German-sounding affair. I personally don't think the vocals work on this remix, and it needed more of a solid bottom end but it was worthy of a mention as the overall production is quite well done indeed.

9. PBB's Pppumped up remix

A good effort here from Italy, produced on a Toshiba Satellite notebook running Cool Edit Pro and Effects Processor Pro, for your information. Not right for Tidy Trax, but a good production all the same, with this mix taking us on an ambient trance outing. Although Tidy Trax is a Hard House label, we can appreciate good production in a different field, so we felt this mix was worthy of a mention.

10. No Frills remix (Jazz & Mase)

Deep, minimal and simple... it's a winning formula if you get it right. Jazz & Mase have produced a superb mix with a great sub-bassline and just the right amount of top lines. With hard house the best tracks are always the more simple ones, as in a club you're dancing to the kick and the bass – not the strings! Less is more, and this approach will cut like a knife in the clubs if you get it right. What goes on the top is irrelevant if your percussion and bass are wrong. Nice one!

DJ Vadim's 5 keys to a successful mix

1. Know your music. Listen to others' music. Listen to structure patterns, variations, other genres...
2. Practice. Then practice some more.
3. Be creative. Create your own sound. Be original.
4. After you've sorted out the above three points, sort out your equipment. The equipment comes next.
5. You will make mistakes. Learn from them.

Born in St Petersburg, raised in London, and an exponent of funk-fuelled beat-heavy UK hip hop, DJ Vadim's forthcoming double A-side single includes Sarah Jones remixes of 'Your Revolution' and a new track featuring Mr Lif, Esoteric and Virtuoso. Look for it on 4 September from Ninja Tune.



And here's a mention to all who entered - better luck next time!

The 4/4 Project - Love is Blind mix: Slick sounding mix, perhaps a little on the polite side **6/10 Aaron McClelland - The Head Crackin' Remix:** It all works pretty well, but those lead lines? **5/10 Adam Collis:** Variety is the spice of life, isn't that what they say? **4/10 Adie F. - Jag'd in mix:** It's funky, but it just don't kick ass **3/10 Alex Jackman's Boom The System Remix:** Competent yet uneventful roller lacking development **5/10 Andi Pletz aka Stutter:** Amazing what you can do with Rebirth and a sampler these days **4/10 Andy Bunn:** This man is half machine...

"If there's a voice involved, don't bring it in before 40 seconds" Howie B

5/10 Andy Ford: That is a new sound... **4/10 Andy Mitchell:** Nothing to recommend nor discourage this type of behaviour **5/10 Andy Smith:** Boy, this takes me back **4/10 Antonio Bailey - Psychmetric mix:** Nice hook, where's the bass action? **5/10 Ashley Newton and his dad:** Easy on the bass there! **4/10 Atomic Hooligan:** Tech-funk jammin' all the way **6/10 Ben & Karl aka Zonecrew:** If I hear that 'classic' Liberate sample introducing something that quite obviously isn't, I just might go in f*cking-sane **3/10 Ben Bostock:** Drawn-out affair, but a fair attempt **7/10 Ben Rush:** Steady trancey workout **6/10 Big Boyz Noise:** Some nice touches, but only some, mind... **5/10 Bob & Al - Frakkar's Dark Mix:** If there's a nightclub in hell, this is the last track of the night... **6/10 Bob Truswell:** Space ...the final frontier... but who's that out there...? Woah, it's Bob! **3/10 Brian McArdle's Fat Larry Mix:** Kicks ass in a kind of 'out-of-time' type way **6/10 Carl Jermy aka Spudgun:** Lacks a certain 'tuffness', but an engaging track nevertheless **6/10 Charles:** Clumsy lead line and vox spoils otherwise funky little number **5/10 Chris Bolton:** Who says banging house music can't have mellow acoustic guitar noodling... **3/10 Chris Shilton:** It's only half a tune, but fortunately the better half **5/10 Chris Thorne - Slip-Limit mix:** No-nonsense stomper, but never really kicks off **6/10 Clive Wragg:** Do you collect cheesy stabs for a living? **4/10 Cold Filter Remix:** Inoffensive, bouncy track characterised by standard procedure **5/10 Colin Welsh aka**

aka Beat Freak Unique: Meandering trance featuring incongruous tacked-on vocal **4/10 Darren Docherty:** Solid performer **7/10 Darren Studhouse - The Undertaker:** Dark gothic plodder, fails even to amuse **3/10 Dave Cherry aka Techno Dave:** Airy, bouncy little number there, Dave **6/10 Dave Sbills aka Beat Science:** You... are weird. And dark **3/10 Dave Tayloy aka Joshua Didds:** Great drums let down by lacklustre mid-range action **6/10 David Chaidron:** Aaaaaarrrrrrggghhhh I'm melting **2/10 David Cooper Orton:** By the numbers - random ones, that is **3/10 David Curtis:** See above **6/10 David Nicol - Sub Saxophonical:** Ice creams will be available in the foyer... **3/10 Derek Holder's Fute-Cha**

Mix: Yew... are a mentalist. Intense **6/10 Derek W Moles:** A new approach to remixing altogether **3/10 DJ Future:** Sedate, rumbling mix burbles self-contentedly through the ether in oblivious stylee. Or something... **3/10 DJ Johnny-d - Remixing in Exile:** Keep at it Johnny-d, onwards and upwards **6/10 DJ Mar-1 Radio Edit:** Probably got a no.1 hit on your hands here - in Portugal that is... **4/10 DJ Rustler:** Alright mate, you're not in Ibiza now... **4/10 DJ Willy:** Great first minute with a late showing of Euro madness **6/10 D-Tek - Electronica:** Solid base lacking in continuity and development **4/10 Duncan Smith:** Promising start sadly not followed up **4/10 Dutch Linda:** Stirling minimalist offering, would benefit from a little variation... **6/10 Dutch Schultz:** Pleasant, yet uninspiring amble through familiar territory **6/10 Eddie O:** Meandering, throbbing, then some more meandering **3/10 Edward Tweddle:** And tonight Matthew, I'm going to be... Richie Hawtin! **5/10 Empathy & Pressure:** Lolloping, noisy debate punctuated by nice breaks **4/10 Erik Pettersen aka Moskeeto:** Downbeat D'n'B reworking with some cool sounds **4/10 Eugenio Sanmarchi aka DJ Euge:** Starts as it means to go on **4/10 Fonzoooooo - Don't Do It:** Ever: Quite right mate **4/10 Frankie Parfitt's Indulgence Mix:** Excellent job **1/10 Fred Fox - Remix 2000:** All the right elements, yet the whole is less than the sum of its parts **4/10 G. Dersley:** If this was played in a forest, and nobody was there to hear it... **3/10 Gary Cheeseman:** Great CD

"Approach a remix in the same way as a track" The Sharp Boys

Ormston: Good percussive workout - more variation needed **6/10 Holli Valsosn:** Minimalist is an understatement - more midrange action needed **3/10 The House Officer:** Nice production, could do with a little more development **7/10 Hydrogen Abuse Remix:** Solid synth shenanigans shift suspiciously, seldom suggesting superior song. Sawvy? **5/10 Ivan Tone:** A pastiche in every sense of the word **4/10 Jack Russell - Jack Russell remix:** Bounds along at an energetic pace **8/10 Jakey J & Stefano Stampede:** This has the right attitude - not to be played at anything less than max volume **8/10 James Dickin - RaeGunne mix:** Question: Can something be engaging yet tedious at the same time? Answer: No **3/10 James Hollingsworth - Quarterback's Diagonal Sister Mix:** Quirky, repetitive, melodic arrangement **7/10 Jamie Morden - To a New Sound mix:** Has its moments for sure, could use some padding **6/10 Jari Holm:** Lightweight piano reworking **5/10 Jas Bowles:** My name is Jas, welcome to my nightmare.....!?! **6/10 Jason Nawty:** Whistle posse make some noooooiiiiizzzzzzel! **4/10 Jason:** Washed out Euro synth pop epic **6/10 JC's Disconnected Remix:** Welcome to the darkside... **6/10 Jeanius - Pure Science:** F*ckin' art students **6/10 Joe Holt:** Solid Euro nightmare compounded by clumsy vocals makes for unpleasant 5.11 minutes **4/10 Johari's Window - Spic & Span Mix:** Techno-trance executed with some class **6/10 John Dowsett - Spring Clean Remix:** Bonus points for the bass **4/10 John Herring - Monkey Mix:** Show me the organ grinder

5/10 John Sheldon: House for the Prozac posse **3/10 Johnathan & Wayne's Joy of Life Remix:** By the numbers trancey workout not without merit **6/10 Jon Cooke - Subsonic Sun Mix:** Fast an' furious d'n'b monster takes no prisoners, full-on nosebleed nasty **7/10 Jon Mercer aka Four & Twenty:** Overdriven tech-geetar stomper reminiscent of a broken tractor I once passed near Cambridge **5/10 Keith Martin's Bang Up To Date Mix:** Slow-filtered simplicity on an undemanding tip **3/10 Kemo & Johnny Boy:** Good techno re-working **6/10 Ken Easter aka Flare:** Pumping sombre-Euro(?) dawdler, if that's possible. Not bad, though **6/10 Kevin Edge - Freebass mix:** Solid stomper with some interesting twists **7/10 King Hell - Rock Hard House Remix:** And this certainly is different, LM **4/10 Kris Noer aka Arnum:** Nice and hard - nosebleed stylee **3/10 Kristian Eldjam:** I'm Rod Serling, and you've just entered... the Twilight Zone **3/10 Lee Smith - Sitting on the Cistern mix:** Driving house action - don't think much of the scenery, though **5/10 Leszek Gaziorek aka Control-Z:** Preferred the bonus track **6/10 Liam & Marc's Noize Junkies Remix:** Laid back and easy techno caper **4/10 Ljoar:** In ya face trance on a single-minded mission **6/10 Lloyd Dunseith aka Organix:** It ain't house, but very interesting, nevertheless **6/10 Lorenzo Cosco aka Streetplayer:** Suddenly the idea of a parallel universe seems beyond doubt **2/10 Luke McGuire:** Unadventurous **3/10 Marad Abuleela:** Can't see that whipping up the dancefloor **4/10 Marcus Pease:** Slow-moving D'n'B epic. Try opening

Coldcut Remix Tips by Jon More



Coldcut's Matt Black (L) and Jonathan More

House pioneers and sampling anarchists Coldcut have been notorious for their remixes since their mid '80s hit version of Eric B and Rakim's 'Paid In Full'. The duo are currently working on CD-R single 'Cooking', a 'funky latin breaks workout' due for release in October on their Ninja Tune label.

1. Always try to remix tunes that you like, that have good parts to inspire you. We often turn down tracks because the music and/or artist is too dreadful!
2. Avoid dodgy rock stars wanting their cred resprayed, unless you've worked out a killer idea, mixed the original lick over a massive beat and squeezed in some crowd noise and a synth pad - this rocks the party. Make sure that you go through the contract details with a fine-tooth-comb-lawyer.
3. Ignore everything in the original except a little bit of vocal. Repeat this monster all your own. Make sure your name is in BIG LETTERS. Do this a few times, then get a load of engineers and programmers to churn out as many similar copies as possible. Collect the money and spend it on girls, boys, drugs, cars and rehab. Find yourself, sell story to DJ style press, release "I found the light" remix project. Take early bath and retire.
4. Don't let the artist, their management, their dealer, palm reader, hairdresser, PA or anyone from the record company anywhere near your studio.
5. Reserve the right to approve 7" edits.
6. Find extra-stupid sound FX for the vocal. Use again and again and again...
7. Some people might think you are cheating if you take all the best bits of all the records you love, loop 'em up and sling the vocal over it.
8. Use as many nom-de-plumes as you have styles.

"Just because no-one else is doing something doesn't mean you shouldn't" Paul Janes

Binatone: Some great lead sound action, could have impressed with better arrangement **6/10 Cope & Yule:** Lightweight Hoover driven track reminiscent of deep space - no atmosphere **3/10 Cosmic Flying Circus:** Missing that vital 20% **5/10 Criminal Justice Remix (Off Yer Face):** Solid, by the numbers. **7/10 Curtis Randles' Neat Mix:** If the 80s revival ever happens, yo' tha man... **5/10 D Wilson - Bionic Mafia remix:** Wondered when the Acid boys were going to get here **6/10 D.C.B:** Hopeless as a remix, but an interesting backdrop **3/10 Dalboy Experience:** Can't quite get a grip on this quirky number. Scores a bizarre **6/10 Dameon Troy's One Man, One Computer, One Sampler Mix:** **3/10 Darknote's Sweet Nastyness Remix:** Bang the Acid! No remorse, no prisoners **7/10 Darren Crane**

cover - who are they, Gary? Good and bad moments **5/10 Gary Nicholas & Peter Nedd:** Bang! Ow. Bang! Ow. Bang! Ow. Bang! Ow... **3/10 Genetica - Funkedupcybermix:** Not quite sure the world's ready for you crazy vulcans just yet **6/10 Genie & Renegade Remix:** Frantic break fails to rescue this formulaic romp **5/10 George Kerremans' Funk Mix:** Yes George, that is funkee **6/10 Gernot Dechert - GFD remix:** Great potential, needs more oomph **6/10 Graham Tomkins aka The Toby Lee Experience:** Epic ambi-tech twister containing every trick in the book **6/10 Greg Spencer aka ChugNut Duo:** Interesting minimal workout **6/10 Gurt Lush Geezers Subsonic Mix:** Hi-NRG dancefloor stomper **6/10 Harold Hare's Cosmic mix:** Good bassline, but it can't do all the work **4/10 Harvey**

"It's important to retain the feel of the original track in some way, while still stamping your mark or style onto it" Timo Maas

your curtains occasionally **4/10 Marius Hanson's Club Mix**: Well intentioned, yet walks a familiar path **7/10 Martin Glynn**: Will someone turn off that car alarm... **5/10 Martin Sadler - Compo remix**: Nice bits, but the tune doesn't gel as a whole **5/10 Martin Sharp - Dune Bug Remix**: Massive cheesy anthem in true hands-in-the-air stylee **8/10 Mathieu Thomas aka Banga Mat**: Banga da noise! **5/10 Matt Squire**: Keep chipping away there, me ol' san **4/10 Matthew Harris**: Percussion let down by lacklustre and unimaginative sounds. Improves around 2.45 mins, though... **4/10 MBI**: Stirling intro gives way to lightweight/ambient filler with nice touches **6/10 Michael Thorup's Copenhagen Edit**: Great pumping disco remix **6/10 Mike Bautchpond**: A little obvious, perhaps **3/10 Morten Borgen aka Nakiel**: Hard, relentless, fast... you were born 10 years too late **6/10 The Mousemen**: Some truly great moments, matched equally by some truly dreadful ones **5/10 Mr J Mantis**: Must try harder! **3/10 Mr Jones**: It's clean, it's kicking, but it never really hits the spot **7/10 mVm - Nu Sound Remix**: Interesting moments in this slow, cluttered and quite bizarre offering **6/10 Narco Santo's Flat Mix**: Promising intro, goes nowhere **4/10 Nature Boy - Be With You mix**: Great little number, NB, you'll go far **7/10 Neil Turbine**: Cool funky groove and minimal lead **6/10 Neill Burbidge**: Make mine a regular **5/10 New English Grooves**: Cane that vocal stab! **4/10 Niall Fitzgerald**: Needs some padding **4/10 Nick Foard - Chandler and Foard remix**: Could be a tad tighter, to say the least **2/10 Nigel Stewart**: Epic tech-house workout in hardbag stylee **8/10 Oliver Guy - Ollie G remix**: Heard-it-all-before but pushes the right buttons **8/10**

Olivier Malhomme: Looks like we got another live one here!! **5/10 Orpheus**: Scuttling d'n'b - starts as it means to go on. And on **5/10 Paddy Kearns**: Back away from the mixer... **4/10 Paul Barker - Dodgy Remix**: You said it mate **4/10 Paul Brook**: Nicely kicks ass in a most regular fashion - as before **5/10 Paul Brook**: Whooh! Rein that bass in immediately! Some nice touches though **5/10 Paul Hampson - Totalis Pumped Up Edit**: Nice lead on this plodding filler **5/10 Paul Henderson aka Soothsayer**: Catchy hook and a couple of engaging build-ups. **8/10 Paul Humphrey**: Respectable, if by the numbers **5/10 Paul Mallow - Brainbug mix**: Nice lead action, but that swoosh sound - every 4 bars? **6/10 Paul Meredith**: If this actually went somewhere, it would be a very different story **5/10 Pete/Gary - Monsoon & Dreamwurx remix**: Fair reworking with nice percussive groove **6/10 Peter Smet's Dance mix**: Promising, yet plodding **5/10 Phill & Craig aka Pleasentree**: This funky, bumpy marathon just goes and goes... **6/10 Ragtag's Bobbin' Bass Mix**: Spartan, pacy techno plodder **6/10 Ralph Cardall - Full Metal Racket mix**: Power-guitar, metal-style? **3/10 Randy Le Clercq & T Hendrikstrons**: Do try and get out a little more this summer, eh? **3/10 Raymond Slack aka DJ Rayz**: Almost two completely different tunes simultaneously. Fascinating **4/10 The Redbull Junky**: Dark, Gothic and Enya? You're spoiling us **5/10 Rich Wilson's Recap remix**: Jesus - Someone hold this guy down! **7/10 Richard Wakefield**: Nice touches in that **8/10 Richard**: Either let the tune breathe some or not at all... **5/10 Rick Conteno**: Clean production lacking in ambience **4/10 Rob Kenyon - Floorspace remix**: Interesting,

funky, bouncy - needs a little polish here and there **7/10 Rob Stevens**: Slow moving, shock-free, yet pumping attempt **6/10 Robert White**: Shaky start leads to mesmeric trance workout **5/10 Robin Potter - Killer Instinctive**: It's not possible to get more trancey **6/10 Robin**: Totally by the numbers **7/10 Rotshtein Danny - Redstone remix**: Dark, industrial, uninspiring - but a fantastic opening shot **4/10 Sayed Hoda**: Rattley, chunky house with inordinately overblown break **5/10 Sensorial Edge Technician's Ups, Downs & All Arounds Remix**: Extended warranty on that Hoover, sir? **5/10 Shock Remix**: Great percussion on this spirited hardcore stomper **6/10 Shoshy Dog's Barkin' Remix**: Sometimes you just gotta go your own way... **6/10 Simon Attwood**: Minimal percussive action - needs some kind of hook though **7/10 Simon Eve & Alex Williams**: Good, sparse, pumping, house number - until it all goes tits-up retro-style... **5/10 Simon Mann**: Relentless **6/10 Simon Morrison**: Nice percussive workout lacking mid-range action **6/10 Simon Taylor**: Nice rapping action, but otherwise, v. poor **4/10 Simone Sighinolfi aka DJ Sigo**: It's slick, bouncy and bigbeat **7/10 Smokin' Bert Cooper**: Takes a while, but when it goes, it goes **7/10 Sofa Nostra**: Is Breakbeat the new house I wonder? No **4/10 Sonic Attic Music - To A New Sound mix**: Polished sound, shame about the arrangement **5/10 Sonic Experiments**: More experimentation is in order **4/10 Sophie**: Top marks for presentation, but for the track, a nicely produced **6/10 Soundblasters**: I think my brain just snapped **3/10 SpaceFloor - Subsonic remix**: Strangely devoid of atmosphere, but apart from that, er... **5/10 Steve Culwick**: I feel unusual... I must go outside **3/10 Steve Fillineham aka Bypass**: Great intro, but equally good post fade-out **4/10 Steve Hoy's Spaced Cadet mix**:

Relentless, yet aimless **3/10 Steve Jones**: A regular dancefloor stormer by the numbers **6/10 Steve Prince - The Surgeon Remix**: Good, bouncy number **5/10 Steve Puts**: Even low-intensity Euro style has its place **3/10 Steven Middleton**: Percussion, check. Vox, check. Stabs, check. Strings, check. Excitement, check... no, wait a minute... **4/10 Stuart Hayward's Hardcore Electro Mix**: One man and his drum machine... and a sampler **5/10 Subsonic Remix Wav MP3 Audio**: That's all that's written, and about as much effort went into the tune, I'll hazard **2/10 Surf & RP: M.O.R. house-medley** **3/10 T.Heaver aka Drug Store Soda Fountain**: Stay away from that fountain, my friend... **3/10 Teddy Pedersen - Future Shapes**: Nice groove but rubber-band style hook could do with a bit more development **5/10 Ten. K - Inside Mix**: Popcorn for the new millennium **4/10 Terry Mac**: Great remix, 15 years too late **3/10 Ties' Fono Remix**: My, what a dark view of the world you must have... **4/10 Time Compression remix**: Kicking breakbeat romper with great production **8/10 Timothy Tittsworth - Bunky's Hype Mix**: Clean sounding, motiveless foray into the competition **5/10 TIP's Thunder Remix**: More inspiring than any Jean-Michel Jarre track **3/10 Tommy Salvato - Almost Finished remix**: All the elements are here, just needs that final push **5/10 Tommy Winder - Bloops and Bleeps Mix**: What the F*ck? **2/10 Toni Kurkimaki aka DJ C-Hill**: Blurps and bleeps extravaganza in low-key style **5/10 Tribalate**: Some great sounds in here - forget the remix, go with the dark breakbeat thang **6/10 Uncle Benz Chicken - Tikka Mix**: Get out. GET OWWWWWWW! **2/10 Uniquely Yours - Filterama Remix**: I can not contain my indifference **4/10 Warren - Aztech Mix**: Fast, hard, ravey - you know the score **6/10 Woodsy's Nasty mix**: You ever thought of moving to Belgium? **7/10**

"Never do anything obvious, or anything that you feel you can't enhance" Spoony - Dreem Teem

Breakin' the law... breakin' the law (or breaking into the remix game)

If dance music is a rich tapestry, then remixers are all too often the hard-to-reach crumbs deep within the shag pile - treated as a non-entity by the PPL (so that's the lion's share of the income scuppered), seldom given the credit they deserve for masterminding a chart smash (witness the cases of Cornershop's 'Brimful of Asha' and Moloko's 'Sing it Back') and often denounced as simple re-interpreters of other people's art. These criticisms are, frankly, unfounded. The list of fearfully good remixes of scarily bad records is as long as your tonearm and heaven knows where our beloved majors would be without the likes of The Sharp Boys and Full Intention to save their collective neck. Whether you're Billy Piper or Billy Ocean, kudos is only ever a jiffy bag and cost of a postage stamp away.

Remixes occur in a variety of ways, notably 'swaps' between established producers (commonly with a mutual respect), straight commissioned remixes by labels (often as a means of crossing into other markets), 'on spec' mixes, (with no guarantee that it'll even get listened to) and the house-head's choice: the good old-fashioned bootleg. Ruling out the first two approaches, it's either the *Music Week* directory and your gift of the gab or your studio trickery and brassness of neck that's going to get results. So what's stopping you?

Howie Martinez, who recently started Manchester-based remix agency and Grand Central offshoot Alchemy, takes up the story: "I'm really disappointed with the attitude of the majors to 'on spec' remixing, because they have nothing to lose. A&R departments should look at it as an advantageous way of seeing what's out there." Whereas Howie expected to be

dealing with a variety of mixes 'on spec' on the behalf of acts such as Only Child and Rae & Christian, that hasn't been the case, and the situation doesn't seem like changing. "It's very hard for companies to release DATs now. In truth, if you were ringing up as an unknown to get something you were into, then your strike-rate would be about the same as if you were punting for deals."

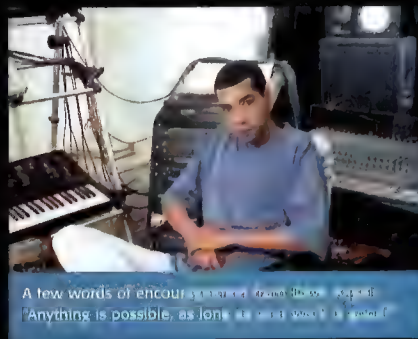
So it looks like the bootleg is your best option. Chances are that you already own more than one, whether you know it or not. Bootlegs come in almost as many forms as remixes - there's the 'self-bootlegging' of originals as in the cases of Van Heiden's 'Flowerz' or Pete Heller's 'Big Love' (where the record companies involved rushed out 'bootleg' white labels to stymie genuine bootleggers). Then there's the combination of classics, like the Chi-town standards of back in the day or Gat Decor's 'Passion'. Finally, you get the unofficial remix bootlegs - the murky waters of which you might find yourself wading through. Sought-after bootlegs, like Dave Angel's version of Eurythmics 'Sweet Dreams', can fetch up to £25.

Neal Slateford of arch-mixers DNA was working as a rep back in 1990, when he happened to hear an a capella version of tortured folkie Susan Vega's 'Tom's Diner' in his car. DNA decided to set it to a dance track. "It was really to get us a profile, a showcase," says Neal now. "We could then say to people 'Look, we can make this person danceable' and they might then give us something proper. The demo tape went for an opinion to a friend who was quite connected, and he decided to press up 500 copies. A week later we were in all the

buzz charts and on national radio."

And that, it seems, is all there is to it. But don't be too hasty. Before you go carving out that Kenny versus Chesney Hawkes mastermix, think twice. "You're on very dodgy ground", says Howie. If you're using an a capella in that way then you're breaking the law by infringing the copyright of that recording." In the end, Neal had to sign away his rights to the track while 'DNA featuring Susan Vega' was No.1 in eleven countries. But don't let it put you off trying. "These people are tomorrow's stars" Howie adds. "While I can't condone it, you could say it's healthy and it's a reason why the UK has so many fantastic independent labels - if other people aren't going to help us, then we'll just do it ourselves."

• Nick Doherty



A few words of encouragement from the... [Anything is possible, as long as you have a good idea]

REMIX!

REMIX COMPETITION



Two chances to win a deal with X-ert Productions and Rebel Recordings

Remix fever once again sweeps the nation – hot on the heels of last year's 'never-to-be-repeated' remix competition, we've got another one for you! We at *The Mix* have again pulled out all the stops and, in conjunction with X-ert Productions and Rebel Recordings, we bring you another chance to remix your way onto a commercial release.

So if you were one of the many readers who didn't take part in last year's Tidy Trax competition (results on pages 75-77), lamenting "I'm not into hard house," you're in luck – this time we're after an underground mix and/or a poppy reworking of 'There's a Shadow' by Tacye. So, load up your sampler with the parts on this month's cover CD and get that remixing head working to the max!



CD info

track 3-7

Tacye 'There's A Shadow'
Check out the full mix on track 3, then get sampling with tracks 4-7

X-ert

Productions

Since its inception in 1987, this hot young company has produced and remixed artists for labels including Creation, Trojan, BMG, Polydor and EMI. The home of producer and remixer Mike Bennett (see below), it creates and licences album projects as well as having three associated labels: Ration-L, Intrinsic and Kickback Records.

Rebel

Recordings

Relative newcomers in the dance arena, Rebel Recordings' aims are quality, value and attitude – and always keeping a finger firmly on the pulse of the ever-changing scene. A year after their launch, they have released over 60 tracks, breaking new talent in all areas of dance music.

How to enter

On this month's cover CD you'll hear 'There's A Shadow' by sultry chanteuse Tacye and top producer Mike Bennett, followed by its composite parts chopped up for your sampling ease. Come up with a wicked remix using as many/few of the parts supplied as you wish, in one or both of the following categories:

1. Commercial mix

The judges are looking for a popstastic effort that embraces the ethereal mood of the track, and that'll do the business on daytime radio. The whole lot must clock in at no more than 3 minutes 30 seconds.

2. Underground mix

Produce a mix that'll go down a storm in the clubs. "The song naturally lends itself to trance," says Mike, "but it would also be exciting to hear it as an innovative underground house or garage mix. All other styles are welcome."

And then...

Clearly mark your entry and all packaging either 'Commercial mix' or 'Underground mix' and send to: *The Mix Remix Compo*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, England BA1 2BW. If you wish to submit entries in both categories, they must be sent in separate packages. Entries must be received at *The Mix* office by 31 August 2000.

The prizes

The winners will each spend a weekend at Far Heath – the plush residential studio in Northamptonshire that's recently played host to Spiritualized and the Prodigy – working with Mike Bennett and engineer Angus Wallace to master and cut their remix. The winning commercial mix will be released on CD and the winning underground mix will receive a vinyl club release, both on Rebel Recordings.

The Judges

MIKE BENNETT

Mike Bennett's credits as a producer/remixer span over 130 albums. His credits include The Fall, Lee 'Scratch' Perry, Bob Marley and the Wailers, Bananarama and Wishbone Ash, to name a few. Mike has also co-written and produced a deluge of dance compilations for the likes of Polygram, Voiceprint and MCI, including *Trance Action* (featuring Roni Size and William Orbit) and co-wrote Ian Brown's new single 'Golden Gaze'.

STEVE VALENTINE

Steve has recently formed London-based Rebel Recordings with a view to promoting and nurturing new talent. His *Gentle Elevation* compilation series has been well-received and covers a broad spectrum of genres including ambient, drum'n'bass, funky house, trance and garage.

ANGUS WALLACE

Angus has worked as a sound engineer and programmer for a multitude of bands who have recorded at his noted Far Heath Studio. Clients include Spiritualized, the Fall, Love and Rockets, Spacemen 3, Sonic Boom, the Jazz Butcher, the Telescopes and, more recently, the Prodigy, for whom he also played drums.

TACYE

Tacye's name originally surfaced in the UK when her trance-driven version of Sweet's 'Love Is Like Oxygen' reached No.11 in Pete Tong's Essential Selection chart. She recently had further chart success when her single 'In My Dreams' reached No.3 in the American *Billboard* chart. Her debut album *I Don't Need A Gun*, just out in the USA and Canada, is now due for a European release.

THE RULES

1. Employees of X-ert Productions, Rebel Recordings, Far Heath Studios or Future Publishing, or their relations, are not allowed to enter. 2. Competitors are allowed one entry in each of the two categories. 3. The judges' decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. 4. The rights of the remix are to be assigned to the record company. Entrants do not have the right to use the track, or the composite parts of the track, other than for the purposes of the competition. 5. In the unlikely event that the prize cannot be awarded, Future Publishing will provide a cash alternative of £1,000. 6. Entries must be sent to *The Mix* offices as detailed above. 7. Entries cannot be returned. 8. Transportation to and from Far Heath Studios is the responsibility of the winners.



THE GREATEST BAND SEARCH IN THE UK IS BACK!

The UK's biggest battle of the bands kicks off in July so get down to your local Yates's Wine Lodge to grab a piece of the action. With over 100 bands competing for the coveted Miller Genuine Draft Undiscovered Originals title, you can't fail to have a top night out.

Don't miss your chance to see the next Oasis or Foo Fighters at your local Yates's Wine Lodge.

REGIONAL HEATS ARE HAPPENING AT A YATES'S WINE LODGE NEAR YOU:



Leeds, Woodhouse Lane - Monday 17th July • Carlisle - Tuesday 18th July • Middlesbrough - Wednesday 19th July
Mansfield - Monday 24th July • Derby - Tuesday 25th July • Leamington Spa - Wednesday 26th July
Cheltenham - Monday 31st July • Swindon - Tuesday 1st August • Newport - Wednesday 2nd August
York - Monday 7th August • Newcastle-upon-Tyne - Tuesday 8th August • Darlington - Wednesday 9th August
Sunderland - Thursday 10th August • Norwich - Monday 14th August • Colchester - Tuesday 15th August
Guildford - Wednesday 16th August • Glasgow - Monday 21st August • Sheffield - Tuesday 22nd August
Preston - Wednesday 23rd August • Slough - Monday 28th August • Harrow - Tuesday 29th August
Maidstone - Wednesday 30th August • Blackpool North - Monday 4th September • Bolton - Tuesday 5th September
Bootle - Wednesday 6th September • Wrexham - Thursday 7th September • Taunton - Monday 11th September
Plymouth - Tuesday 12th September • Southampton - Wednesday 13th September • Hanley - Monday 18th September
Wolverhampton - Tuesday 19th September • Solihull - Wednesday 20th September • Luton - Monday 25th September
Oxford - Tuesday 26th September • Harlow - Wednesday 27th September • Watford - Thursday 28th September

REGIONAL FINALS

Glasgow - Monday 2nd October
Hull - Tuesday 3rd October
Liverpool, Queen Square - Wednesday 4th October
Warrington - Thursday 5th October
Bristol - Monday 9th October
Portsmouth - Tuesday 10th October
Southend-on-Sea - Wednesday 11th October
Nottingham - Monday 16th October
Coventry - Tuesday 17th October
Reading - Wednesday 18th October
Croydon - Monday 23rd October
Romford - Tuesday 24th October

SEMI FINALS

NORTH - Blackpool South
Monday 6th November
NORTH WEST - Manchester, Portland Street
Tuesday 7th November
SOUTH WEST - Swansea
Wednesday 8th November
LONDON AREA - Lewisham
Thursday 9th November

FINAL

Venue to be confirmed Saturday 25th November

Not only can you check out the competition, but you could be winning your band thousands of pounds worth of prizes:

£5,000 worth of new gear for your band • A day in a studio professionally recording a track
200 CDs of the winning track distributed to major record labels with the endorsement of Future Publishing
The track will also be featured on the cover CDs of Total Guitar, Guitarist, Future Music, The Mix, Guitar Techniques, Computer Music, Metal Hammer and Classic Rock, reaching well over 150,000 readers.

For the latest competition news check out the Undiscovered Originals website on intermusic.com



new releases



in brief

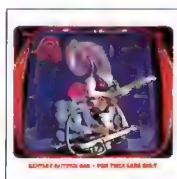
BARRATT WAUGH *I Love You Goodbye* (DEGOUT)
"Waugh, what is he good for?" Absolutely nothing! But hopefully the ex-child prodigy's appalling warbling will get Sir Cliff's 'Blacknight' roster of alleged artists shut down by environmental health Sub-Radio 2 swill. (SO)



MATCHBOX TWENTY *Mad Season* by Matchbox Twenty (Atlantic)
They've been heaped with Grammys since their debut, and this, their second album, is even stronger on the quality rock songwriting front. REM for the people. (PS)

SUPERSTAR *Phat Dat* (Camp Fabulous Records.)
An intriguing mixture of softly sung vocals and big, overblown chord arrangements, Phat Dat could well be one of the best '70s albums never recorded – until now. (PS)

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Super Breaks 2* (BLUP)
The vinyl equivalent of 'Before They Were Famous', this excellent '70s compilation proves yet again that most of those classic breaks and samples were better first time around. A first-class history lesson, all the same. (SO)



BENTLEY RHYTHM ACE FOR YOUR EARS ONLY (BRA SOUNDS)

18 months in the making, this second instalment in the Stokes/March story predictably serves up more of the 'hip hop on steroids' we fondly know as big beat. Kermit (Black Grape vocalist; not frog) features on 'How'd I Do Dat?', but *For Your Ears Only* is mostly a densely-layered, beats-'n'-basslines instrumental affair, sounding like a particularly well thought-out mix album. BRA's trademark playfulness is never far from the surface, but they're too canny to take their eyes off your feet for long. We'll all be sick of it by the end of summer, but, for now, it's great. • Simon Ounsworth

Producer: Mike Stokes, Richard March

Studio: BRA Sounds

Engineer: Unknown

Verdict: Studio time well spent.....8/10



FUNGUS ROOKIE SEASON (FUNGUS)

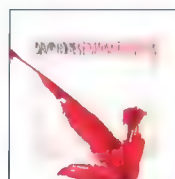
Pure American melodic brat-punk from... er, Varberg, Sweden. Yet more proof that the Swedes are matched only by the Japanese in the musical mimicry stakes. *Rookie Season* pushes all the usual post-Husker Du buttons – growling, overdriven guitars, wailing two-part-harmony choruses, and a general downer on all things corporate and middle-aged. It's about as ground-breaking as Bob The Builder, but a smattering of catchy tunes just about lift Fungus out of the run of the punk mill, and their non-stop Andrex puppy energy hints at a far more formidable live act. • Simon Ounsworth

Producer: Chris Sheldon

Studio: Various

Engineer: Various

Verdict: Could grow on you.....7/10



DAVID HOLMES BOW DOWN TO THE EXIT SIGN (GO BEAT)

This is the follow-up to the Silver-selling *Let's Get Killed*, containing the Belfast boy's usual use of intelligent lyrics amid its musical homage to NYC's 'Exit to Brooklyn' sign. Holmes' third Go Beat album sees him venturing even further into the film score, multi-media arena – understandable since, between remixing Primal Scream, he's been scoring TV dramas and Hollywood features. *Bow Down...* is the funky soundtrack to the unfilmed *Living Room*: a newcomer in a strange city-type tome. And it works – like Iggy Pop meeting Isaac Hayes on the *Pulp Fiction* set! • Phil Strongman

Producer: Unknown

Studio: Unknown

Engineer: Unknown

Verdict: Hear the movie, now8/10



GLOBO THIS TIME IT'S GLOBO (HYDROGEN DUKEBOX RECORDS)

Their controversial *Pro-War Globo* debut caused a veritable storm, now they've blasted back into the fray with an eclectic mix of breaks, beats, bleeps and bounce. Reminiscent in places of Pop Will Eat Itself colliding with Eat Static, *This Time It's Globo* bobs along on the back of some laid-back, first-class songwriting and crystal-clear production. A myriad of outstanding alternative dance pop tracks include the lyrically provoking, but melodically catchy 'Globo Conspiracy' and dancefloor-filling 'Thirteen'. This is an essential purchase and shouldn't be missed. • Rob Evans

Producers: Paul Thompson

Studio: Suite 16, various

Engineer: Rex Sergeant, Jack Dangers

Verdict: The Globo(!) revolution starts here...8/10



Music for chameleons

words **Jon Andre Holley**

'Sing It Back' may have transformed Moloko from strange trip hoppers to diva-endowed disco act in the eyes of the public, but the Sheffield duo refuse to be pigeonholed by success

Moloko are unquestionably one of the most unpredictable bands around, bar none. After all, what group would name their debut album after a particularly 'tight sweater' that shrunk in the wash? Or, for that matter, name themselves after the Russian word for a glass of milk – the inspiration of which was the equally quirky Stanley Kubrick film *A Clockwork Orange*? How many duos do you know who've been bottled off stage by angry Italian punks waiting for the main event, The Sex Pistols, to enter the arena? Answer: not many.

Such an off-key reputation can easily distract from Moloko's indisputable musical acumen, however. Their trio of albums to date have showcased some of the most convincing hybrid-dance music of the post-sampler era. Influences are many and varied, with a spirit veering towards the free and bohemian side of life – for an Irish girl and a Sheffield lad, that is!

Funk Dat

Tight Sweater, Moloko's aforementioned debut album, introduced us to the wonderful world of producer Mark Brydon and singer Roisin Murphy. Here the group immersed themselves in a sea of zappy analogue synths, post-Clinton P-Funk references, and oddball non-linear lyricism: "I actually met Clinton at the time, getting on a tour bus," reflects Brydon, before adding, in steely Sheffield-speak, "He was grand! It's fair to say he was a bit of a hero of mine; a real visionary – ahead of his time; invented modern dance music."

Brydon's assessment has the cocksure air of a

graduate pupil: on *that* album 'Day For Night' was the best electro-funk record never made for breakdancing; 'Domino' ushered in Ann Dudley to exercise some of her 'art of noise' on the string-section, whilst 'Fe Fi Fun For Me' thrust Moloko into the dubious world of 'trip hop', a scene they were as quick to reject as a hunger-striker does KFC!

"We did not really want to get involved with all that trip hop stuff at the time," dismisses Brydon. "It's like the speed garage thing. It was a media-invented term,

and not a genuine reflection of the creative stuff that was going on at the time.

"'Fe Fi Fun For Me', 'Do You Like My Tight Sweater', and other stuff from the debut album expressed a Clinton-esque side to us. The beats were loud, loping, and in that dope-beat, hip hop style. Because of these factors, and Roisin's vocal textures, people immediately categorised us with a

"When we first came out we were this strange pair of trip hoppers. Once 'Sing It Back' charted, the media tagged us a disco act, and I was a diva. Now, gawd knows what they are calling us!" **Roisin**

movement that history has proven we have little or nothing to do with.

"We've always thrown in plenty of different sounds and genres," Brydon proceeds in a laconic Yorkist's brogue. "It's fair to say that the first album embraced a bit of good ol' fashioned P-Funk, as well as jazz and hip hop. It's also fair to say that the second album was very Latin-tinged in parts. That's us. We just do what we want, and by virtue of our own sound, and the environment we have grown up around, it comes out through a different personal synthesis."

"It's funny how you get pigeonholed," a defiant Roisin Murphy interjects. "When we first came out we were this strange pair of trip hoppers. Then, once 'Sing It Back' charted, the media tagged us a disco" ☺

"We perhaps haven't got the recognition we deserve for beat innovation. We were doing off-beats and two rhythmic tempos running concurrently, in the same time and half-time, since our debut album – way before Timbaland, God bless his soul" **Mark**

» act, and I was a diva. Now, gawd knows what they are calling us! We just reserve the right to make whatever music we feel like making."

Likely lads

Aaah, "Bring it back, sing it back" – the last classic disco vocal anthem of the century! "Boris Dlugosch asked for the parts to the song, because he loved the track," continues Murphy. "We had actually reworked one of his track's – 'Keep On Pushing' – to create 'Sing It Back', so it was like a mutual remixing project."

Murphy smiles at the memory, before revealing that she has recently been in Germany working on a song with Dlugosch called 'Why Do We Hang Out Hung Up? (Never Enough)'. This is part of the reciprocal deal struck between the two parties: "We asked him how much money he wanted for the mix," explains Murphy, "but he just said, 'I want to remix it; I love the track.'"

"Yeah, he's a good lad is Mr Dlugosch," declares Brydon. "And he's got a great DJ name, too. It was good because – not mentioning any names – we've had mixes back where you can tell that they've just done it for the money. They knock up something half-heartedly using trademark sounds, which is a euphemism for copying their last mix. But Boris turned 'Sing It Back' into something with classic quality, with a bit of time, care and natural focus. We respect that."



Doctorin' the Tardis

The latest *Doctor Who*-like incarnation of Moloko is *Things To Make And Do*. The recent hit single, 'The Time Is Now', is a fitting postscript to 'Sing It Back' – replete with alternative treatment from the likes of the legendary François K, Can 7, Matt Darey and Bambino Casino. Heck! This group can't even be entrusted with schizophrenic about-turns in music policy. Just when we thought we'd worked Moloko out they go and break the habit of a lifetime, maintaining the musical status quo with an album of Billie Holiday torch vocals atop light acoustic disco rhythms.

"We recorded the album while we were still promoting the second album," reveals Brydon. "We don't really have a hard and fast time scale attitude to making music. These days Roisin does her stuff on a portastudio, getting ideas down on a crappy Tascam 4-track."

"Crappy"? Brydon is quick to clarify his apparent negativity: "By 'crappy', I don't mean that the Tascam is no good; I mean crappy – as opposed to a full-on, state-of-art, fully-equipped studio. Tascam are as good as any at producing a successful multitrack."

Back on track, Brydon continues, "With this album, it was nice to get away from the sampling thing as well. The whole thing about sampling a one-bar loop and ending up giving away 100% of publishing really seemed illogical to me."

But surely sampling has been kind to some lucky individuals, like Sean 'Puffy' Coombes, for example? "Puffy's got his own science to sampling, which is almost unofficially patented," counters Brydon. "It's like him and Will Smith – the rest leave well enough alone."

Funky drummer

"I must admit I was heavily into my Juno on the first album – that and getting my hands dirty digging through all sorts of old records to come up with



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» authentic, never-before-used samples," Brydon recalls. "Thankfully, I've gotten over being a 'rare groove' heister – now and forever. It can be a lonely and sad pursuit, trawling record shops for that one record!

"We try not to wear the '70s as a badge, and it's the same with the '90s. It's not good to become stuck in a rut. I suppose working with live instrumentation on this album, as well as being a continuation of what 'Sing It Back' hinted at, was, in some way, a move forward from where we were at. It was nice to work with a spontaneous funky drummer, as opposed to tweaking and moving numbers and black dots on an edit screen. Surely that wasn't the way Rufus and Chaka Khan did it! If I had to cue up another breakbeat, I would have gone mental!

"That said, I've got a load of software samplers which I'm trying a few ideas out on while we are touring the country. I also think that there is room for creative sampling. Take the beats we make: there was one where we hit a bass guitar hard with drum sticks, thus creating a sound like that percussive Brazilian instrument, the name of which escapes me."

Beat dis

Bravado momentarily gets the better of Brydon: "We perhaps haven't got the recognition we deserve for beat innovation," he boasts. "I call them 'spaghetti sauce beats'. We were doing off-beats and two rhythmic tempos running concurrently, in the same time and half-time, since our debut album – way before Timbaland, God bless his soul. That's the irony of making music.

"When we started we thought we were being Dr. Dre, but it came out as 'Moloko beats' and, by virtue of us being English, and from Sheffield, we were 'trip hop'. It was the same when we recorded the string section to 'Domino' at Angel Studios in London for the third single off the first album: we thought we were giving the tune a Curtis Mayfield blaxploitation movie-feel, but it came out different. It was great in its own way – not a Curtis pastiche at all. I think that's good, though."

This scribe can personally recall the session in question: whilst Dudley was conducting away, Brydon received a phone message saying that he had left the

"With this album, it was nice to get away from the sampling thing as well. The whole thing about sampling a one-bar loop and ending up giving away 100% of publishing really seemed illogical to me" **Mark**

bath water running in his second floor Sheffield flat and it was beginning to seep through to the flat below! To say his response to this news was nonchalant is something of a gross understatement: "Tell him to smash me front door in and turn it off," shrugged Brydon, as his music partner nodded her approval.

Back to the future

Brydon confesses to regularly employing his faithful analogue keyboards, "...whether virtual or real." Eddie, his equally faithful right-hand man, "...loves anything old, with a rounded wooden finish! His Moog Prodigy is like a third arm! Put a bit of wood on the side and he'd love my Korg MS20," laughs Brydon, semi-seriously.

Things To Make And Do was recorded in September Sounds Studio, in the plush London district of Richmond: "It's The Cocteau Twins' studio, so, as you might expect, there are lots of '80s things floating around – a Mellotron, four DX7s, and something like 200 foot pedals," jokes Brydon. "There are loads of foot pedals; Imelda Markos would love it there! Seriously, it's a great studio, and lots of that '80s gear is coming back, but I've never been a fan of the DX7. I never liked it then, and I won't use it now!"

So there. And so to the future...

"The future is now," concludes Brydon, not without a dash of sarcasm. "We are creating the future – not the past!"



selected kit list

CONSOLE

Mackie 24:8:2 (with fader automation)

Yamaha O1V

RECORDING

Alesis ADAT x 2

Alesis ADAT XT

Apple Macintosh G3

Digidesign Pro Tools

Digidesign 882

Panasonic 3700 DAT

MONITORS

Genelec powered monitors (with sub unit)

Yamaha NS10

OUTBOARD/PROCESSING

Alesis Quadraverb

Boss ME8

Digitech Vocalist

Ensoniq DP/4+

Heil Talk Box

Lexicon PCM80

SYNTHS

Clavia Nord Lead

Emu Vintage Keys

Korg MS20

Korg X3

Korg Prophecy

Moog Prodigy

Roland SH3

Roland SH101

Roland Juno 106

Yamaha CS1X

SAMPLERS

Akai CD3000

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MIDI for all occasions

Get to grips with the powerful MIDI editors in Cubase, and you'll wonder how you ever coped without them

words **Adam Crute**

Cubase started life as a MIDI-only recording system, with the audio and subsequent VST technology being bolted on to the main core of the program in more recent years. As a result of this legacy, Cubase offers many ways of viewing and manipulating MIDI data – quite a few of which are completely overlooked and ignored by most users. But even in today's world of audio-plus-MIDI workstations, none of these powerful editors have become redundant, even though many new programs are steering away from high levels of MIDI manipulation altogether, favouring an audio-only editing approach. If you're already familiar with some of the more powerful editors, then chances are you can't live without them. For benefit of those yet to be initiated into the joys of MIDI, Cubase-style, let's take a look...

Getting parts into the editors

Opening a part in an editor is simply a case of double-clicking on it, or selecting the desired editor from the Edit menu. You can also open multiple parts within an editor, either from the same track or across multiple tracks. To do this, select the parts you wish to edit, and then select the desired editor from the Edit menu. Voila! And if you want to view the entire contents of a track in an editor, simply select the desired track in the track list, ensuring no parts are already selected, and select the required editor.

All of Cubase's 'normal' editors – Key, Drum, Grid/List and Score, for instance – have much in common: at the top of each of these windows is the function bar (Fig.01). Some of the controls here are self-explanatory, such as Edit Solo, which, unsurprisingly, 'solos' the material selected within the editor. When you enter more than one part in the selected editor at the same time, only one part is actually active and ready to be edited; the others are greyed out, as can be seen in Fig.02. To activate one of the other parts, just click on an event within that part. If, on the other hand, one of the parts you have opened in the editor is blank, you'll need to use the Goto sub-menu (Fig.03) to activate that part.

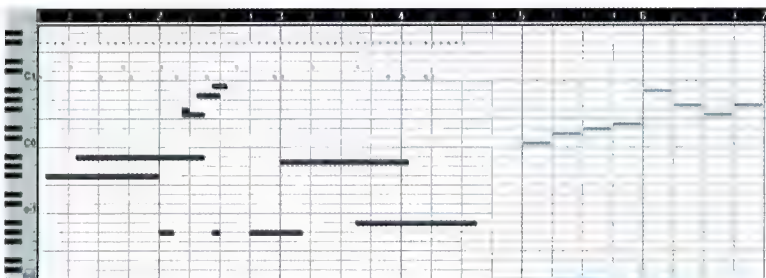


Fig.02: Multiple parts viewed in the key editor. The greyed out events contain inactive parts

The sub-menus

The 'To' sub-menu (Fig.04) is used to specify which events you want to process with operations from the Function menu. Most of the options here are self-explanatory; the difference between looped and cycled events can be a tad confusing, however. (To briefly clarify: cycled events are those positioned between the locators when the cycle button in the transport is 'lit'; looped events are contained within the editor's own loop limits.)

The 'Do' sub-menu (Fig.05, p. 90) works in close conjunction with the 'To' sub-menu and offers a selection of options for doodling around with your MIDI data, including Fixed Note (sets all pitch values to the currently selected note); Delete Note (removes all instances of the selected note); Keep Note (deletes all notes except for all instances of the selected note); Repeat (repeats events that are contained within a loop or a cycle to the end of the selected part); Fill (fills the looped or cycled area with instances of the last note played); Reverse (flips events around an imaginary centre line); and Delete (deletes notes within the limits set by the 'To' sub-menu).

Describing each and every variant here would be terribly dull. So why not turn to your computer screens instead? The best way to get to grips with the ways in which these 'To' and 'Do' sub-menus can interact with each other is to play around with them.

Two other elements that work closely together are the Snap and Quant (quantise) settings, as circled in Fig.06 on p. 90. Snap governs the spacing between beats to which any edits or adjustments

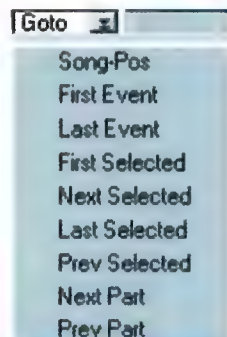


Fig.03: The Goto sub-menu can be used for navigating within an editor

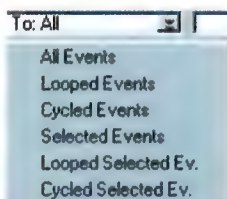
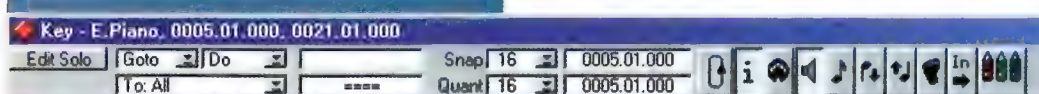


Fig.04: The 'To' sub-menu. This provides a filter for any other processes you may wish to carry out

Fig.01: The editor functions bar – let the editing begin...



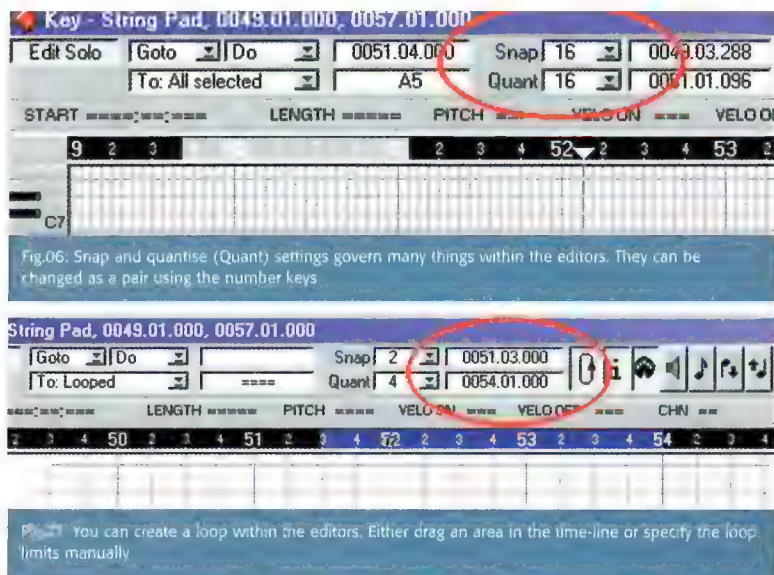


Fig.06. Snap and quantise (Quant) settings govern many things within the editors. They can be changed as a pair using the number keys

will automatically 'snap' or lock on to. If, say, having selected a snap setting of 16, you were to re-size an event, then you would only be able to re-size that event to within 1/16 of a beat. The Quant setting, meanwhile, is used to govern the length of any inputted notes – and the master quantisation resolution, obviously.

There are shortcuts to allow you to swiftly change the Snap and Quant settings as a pair: number keys 1 through to 7 – the ones at the top of the QWERTY keyboard – change the resolution; the 't' key switches them to triplets, and the full stop changes them to dotted note values.

Loops

It is possible to create loops within the normal editors. To define a loop, you can either enter its values in the appropriate boxes, as circled in Fig.07, or click and drag an area in the timeline – see the blue area on the timeline in Fig.07. While in standard playback mode, the looped area within an editor will repeatedly loop as the rest of your song continues to play in a linear fashion. When cycle mode is simultaneously activated during playback, the looped area within an editor will again repeatedly loop, as previously described; so will the rest of your song, in effect, by continuously 'cycling' between the selected locators – for example, between bar 16 and 48, then back to bar 16 through to 48 again, ad infinitum – irrespective of the looped area.

The switch icons

To the left of all the normal editor screens is a set of icons. These act as switches and can be toggled on and off as desired. Here's a description of each one:

Loop

This button activates and deactivates the editor's loop mode.

Info

This switches the info line on and off. When an event in the editor is selected its parameters are displayed and can be edited in this bar.

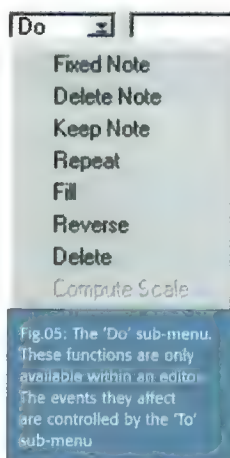


Fig.05: The 'Do' sub-menu. These functions are only available within an editor. The events they affect are controlled by the 'To' sub-menu



MIDI

This sets whether the editor is 'listening' for incoming MIDI information or not. How any incoming MIDI data is handled depends on the settings of other switches.



Speaker

When this switch is activated any of the notes or events that you select in the editor will be played.



Note

When this switch is selected, notes within the editor are matched to incoming MIDI notes. Playing a key on your keyboard automatically adjusts the pitch of the currently selected note – Cubase then jumps its selection to the next note.



Vel.on

This works in the same way as the note switch, except here you are entering velocity instead of pitch data – useful for injecting variation into hi-hat parts, for example. Opening the relevant part in the editor, activating the MIDI in and Vel.on (velocity on) switches, and selecting the first note of the part lets you 'play' in the velocities from your keyboard.



Vel.off

When the MIDI specification was first laid down, there was provision for release velocity to be implemented. This works on the same principle as normal note-on velocity, only the message is generated when a key is released. Unfortunately, very few MIDI devices take advantage of this. Check the MIDI implementation chart in your keyboard's manual; you could soon be using this switch in much the same way as the velocity on switch.



Step

Activating this switch puts you into step input mode. Notes are entered according to the Snap and Quant values, but aren't registered until all keys are released, allowing you to enter chords.



Insert

The insert switch is used in conjunction with step input mode. All events after the insert point are moved forward by the snap value as each note is entered.



Colourise

You can colour-code the events in the editor in various ways using this switch. When clicked, a menu will drop down offering choices of how to colour-group the events.

Undoing the changes

Finally, you can cancel any changes made in an editor at any time by hitting escape. This closes the editor in question, and returns the edited part(s) to its original state. Pressing enter or simply closing the window means all edits are kept – there's no going back!

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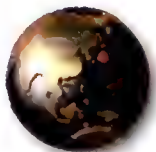
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help file

glossary

Automated

In the context of mixing, the movements of controls, especially faders, are programmed by the user and replayed automatically. Many systems allow you to edit the fine points of an automated mix.

Balanced

An output is split into two signals, identical except for a 180° phase relationship. On input, the 'cold' (out-of-phase) signal is inverted and re-combined with the 'hot' (in-phase) signal. This ensures that noise from the cable run is eliminated.

CD-R

Recordable CD. Achieved by 'burning' data into a special coating on the CD. As an alternative, CDR/W (Read/Write) is also available, which can be erased, as well as written.

Clipping

When an audio signal reaches the limits of its power supply (analogue) or the highest number possible (digital) it can go no further. Any attempt to exceed these bounds will result in the 'clipping' of the signal (chopping the top off).

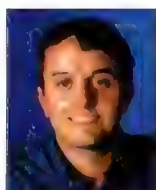
dB (decibel)

The statement of a ratio (magnitude of one value compared to another) according to $10\log_{10}(P1/P2)$ for powers or $20\log_{10}(P1/P2)$ for non-powers, where P1 is a reference quantity (0dB) and P2 is the measured quantity. In audio, the 20log version is most common and in that case a doubling of quantity is equal to a 6dB rise.

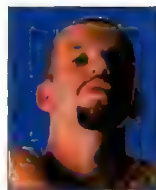
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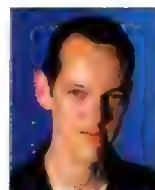
this month's *Help File* team



NAME: Seb Pecchia
OCCUPATION: engineer/producer
CHOSEN SUBJECTS: Pro Tools, plug-ins, sequencing, effects, tea with one sugar



NAME: David Harrow
OCCUPATION: musician/producer
CHOSEN SUBJECTS: Laptop studios, live recording, drum 'n'bass, Cuban cigars



NAME: Oz Owen
OCCUPATION: TM reviews editor
CHOSEN SUBJECTS: Logic Audio, MIDI, tube synthesis, Coronation Street

Pocket power

Q I want to get back into recording. I have a new laptop and want to know what PCMCIA soundcards are available. Also, are there any good portable DAT recorders that can plug directly into the laptop to edit stuff, or would you go through a digital I/O on the PCMCIA soundcard?

Dave Wakeman, by email

A Well, congratulations on your new laptop! I have a new one too as my trusty ol' 266 finally died after three heavy years of 'road work'. These days, laptops are fully able to compete with those clunky studio-bound towers and, with battery power getting better, you can work without mains power for longer – although I was pleased to see complimentary charging terminals on an American Airlines flight recently...

Anyway, back to your question. The most-often recommended PC card I know of is the wonderful Digigram VX-Pocket PCMCIA card (given a glowing review in issue 70 by yours truly, and yours for £511). This gives you both analogue and digital I/O. I don't know what you want to do with your DAT recorder, but I have to say that since I got the VX card the laptop has replaced my DAT as my main mastering machine, as well as being used as a DJ console and a stereo field recording unit.

So far there are no multi-channel connections available, but with the all-new FireWire ports they can't be far away (FireWire to 8-channel analogue, now that would be nice!) If you're on a budget I would suggest

that you forget about the DAT for the time being and get a copy of Bias Peak. This handy application will take care of all your recording, editing and mastering needs and will even compile your tracks for 'toasting'. The UK distributor for Bias' Peak and Digigram's VX Pocket is SCV London (Tel: 0207 923 1892).

A laptop, your fave sequencer package and Peak... what else do you need? Good luck, and I welcome another 'Road Warrior'!

Dave Harrow



Digigram's VXpocket will give you both analogue and digital I/O for your laptop.



The choice of powered nearfields is vast – so make sure you try before you buy

Which monitors?

Q I want to buy some powered nearfield monitors for home studio use. The Absolute 4Ps seem very attractive, but I can't find any info on them on the internet except on the Soundcraft website. Is this because these monitors are a well-kept and professional secret, or because they have embarrassingly big flaws?

Anyway, it's very rare to obtain so little internet feedback as with the Absolutes! Have you got a clue on these fellas?

Thomas Deflo, Brussels

A From what we've heard, the Absolute 4Ps are a good monitor for the money – a little harsh on the ears over long sessions, perhaps – but with so many monitors to choose from it's difficult to give a definitive answer. The advice you'd get from most people would be to audition as many monitors as possible with material you're familiar with and make your mind up from there, but that's a bit flakey as answers go, and helps you not one bit. So I decided to take up your cause and put

that very same question to our contributors to get their angle on monitoring...

Sean Vincent suggests the Mackie HR824s (you'll have to part with a bit more cash, but lots of studio bods seem to like them) or the Genelec 1029s or 2029s. Alan Branch simply cannot be separated from his powered HHB Circle 5s, while Steve Evans plumps for the Spondor SA300s.

So why not check out the Absolutes, and while you're at it, see if you can sample a few others at the same time? And remember – take your time when choosing monitors, as everything you hear comes through them, so buying a pair that you're not happy with could be a real setback.

Oz Owen

Download dilemma

Q Have other readers of *The Mix* had any trouble downloading Creative Labs Liveware 3.0? I spent around eight hours downloading the software and I'm having a bit of trouble making it work. The software downloaded was the SoundBlaster Live Windows 98 drivers – 4.44Mb – and complete (Liveware) package, both from Asia, coming in at 28.8Mb. I'm unemployed, so as you might imagine spending that amount of time on the phone for no discernable result is a little irritating.

Richard Sherman, by email

A Well, Richard, I've been on to the guys at Creative and they sounded quite surprised by this news – but offered some advice. Firstly, close down any programs/utilities that might be running in the background and clean out the C:\WINDOWS\TEMP file before you install the downloaded Zip file.

Sometimes, however, it seems the downloaded files may get strange names – there's no rhyme or reason, that's just the way it is. So for the full package, the correct downloaded file name for Liveware 3.0 should be: LW30FULL_9X.ZIP. And for the split package, the file names are: LW30SETUP.ZIP, LW3LIB1.EXE, LW3LIB2.EXE, LW3LIB3.EXE, and LW39X.EXE.

Glossary

DAI

Digital Audio Tape. A stereo digital tape format originally developed as a consumer format, but taken up as a mastering format by the audio industry. Uses a special rotating head assembly.

Dithering

Any process in which computer signals that weren't there at the input and weren't meant to be added. This is normally expressed as a percentage of the signal – as total harmonic distortion, for example.

DSP

Digital Signal Processor. A specialised microchip used to rapidly process data streams according to an algorithm.

Duplex

The ability of a soundcard to play and record audio at the same time. 'Full duplex' means there is no loss – e.g. some cards cannot play and record at the same sample rate on the output in duplex mode.

Enhancing

A generic term for 'spectral enhancement' of sound. One popular variation is harmonic distortion, where the source is distorted and the high frequency content that is added back into the audio, causing a 'brightening' of the sound.

FireWire

Also known as IEEE-1394, it is a high-speed large bandwidth interface between computers and peripheral devices. It features simplified cabling, hot plugging, and transfer speeds of up to 400 megabits per second.

Frequency Response

A measure of how well a system can reproduce the full range of frequencies. It is usually expressed as a graph plotting frequency and level axes, showing the resulting output curve from a flat input. It can also be represented as a bandwidth with flat variation (for example 20Hz to 20kHz ± 3 dB).

glossary

Interface

Anything that aids interconnection. It could be a screen to a computer user, or the MIDI protocol to MIDI equipment.

Mastering

The process of fine-tuning a track before committing to mass duplication, paying particular attention to the stereo image, the overall frequency balance and the dynamics.

Optical

Alternative to the coaxial and balanced line digital connections. The cable is optical fibre. The most popular standards you'll find in optical connections are S/PDIF and ADAT optical.

PCM cards

PCM stands for Pulse Code Modulation, the common digital audio data format. PCM-based synths use pre-sampled sounds to form the basis of sounds, so PCM cards store PCM sounds.

PCMCIA

Stands for Personal Computer Memory Card International Association. Also known as 'PC cards' and used widely in laptops due to their physical size – they're much smaller than PCI cards, for example.

SCMS

Serial Copy Management System. A data 'flag' included in a digital audio bitstream, originally developed for copyright protection back when DAT was intended for the consumer market.

SCSI

Small Computer Systems Interface. Parallel data interface used to connect storage devices to a computer.

Soundcard

Describes any computer 'card' that acts as an audio interface, such as the Creative Labs SoundBlaster series, the Digidesign Audio Media III, Korg OASYS, and so on.

After downloading, check that the filenames correspond to the above list. And if that doesn't do it, call the Creative team for more detailed technical support on 01189 344744.

Oz Owen

DAT's the way

Q My DAT machine has been struggling to work properly, and I just wondered if there was anything I could do to sort out the problem myself. It's a Tascam DA30 and has been used a fair bit, but was recently serviced. However, the problem now seems to be that occasionally when I put a tape in, the unit seems to wheeze and sounds like it's dying. If I attempt to use the controls – even the 'eject' button – nothing happens at first, and then it does one of two things: settles down or reads an 'error 2' message in the display. I don't have bundles of cash to spare, so I'm desperate for a cheap solution to the problem. Any ideas?

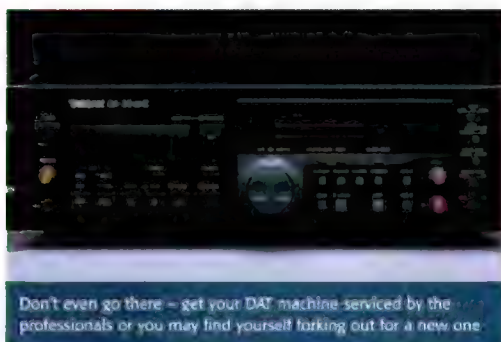
Mitch Kemble, by email

A Cheap solutions and DAT machines don't go hand-in-hand. Unfortunately DAT – although it may be great sonically – is one of the most unreliable media going. The tape needs to be treated with great care – and the machines need even more care. The wheezing sound you can hear is actually the tape transport mechanism struggling to operate correctly, so when you insert a tape the unit is working twice as hard to pick up the tape and lay it against the tape head.

While this is happening you will have no control over the unit. The error 2 message means that the transport is faulty. If the problem is left unchecked you run the risk of having your tapes chewed up, and you also run the risk of getting sizeable errors on record and playback. So at the end of the day you will need a qualified technician to sort it out.

From past experience it's likely that the bearings that sit beneath the transport mechanism are worn or that there is excess dirt and grime build-up. It might cost around £100 to fix (at a guess), but this is well worth doing if you value the music you make and don't want to fork out cash for a new machine. And under no circumstances attempt to do this yourself – if you damage those heads you will be looking at a bill four times the size.

Seb Pecchia



Don't even go there – get your DAT machine serviced by the professionals or you may find yourself forking out for a new one.

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Leicester Tel: 0116 262 4183
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Above (left to right): HHB Circle 5 midfield monitor (active and passive versions available), HHB Circle 1 powered sub-woofer, HHB Circle 3 nearfield monitor (active and passive versions available).

Left: Mick Fleetwood with HHB Circle 5 active midfield monitors and Circle 1 powered sub-woofer.

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Luke Cunningham
Label Manager,
Freedom 4

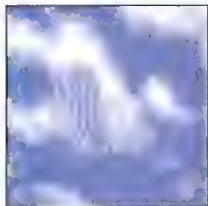


Sam Winwood
A&R, Sony S2



Sil Willcox
MD, Cruisin
Music

BILLIEVE THE BEGINNING...



TM: This kicks off with a smart, if slightly ironic rap part – look out, Ali G – and the vibe is a kind of post-Portishead, trip hop thang. Cool line: "Dis song won't get played

on the radio, cos they can't handle what I gotta say to ya". We kinda like the seemingly silly attitude. Let's hope that's the intent! We also like the off-the-wall attitude and (kind of) original angle this dude's got. OK, he might be a tad clichéd in the Ali G department – and we all know twits like that, innit? But he's got an obvious feel for da groove, knows his production values well, and, with a little more attention to the finer details of his musings, deserves to be recognised – provided he ditches the yellow snorkel parka type of dang thang, that is...

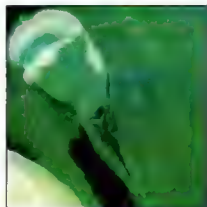
Sam: I'm not sure if this is meant to be this lightweight. If it is, I'm not really sure it works.

Sil: The rapping has an encouraging underground feel to it, yet the bland repetitiveness of the loop takes this nowhere.

Luke: A simple idea, that with a bit more thought might have worked. The loops sound a bit dated, though. Vocally, it doesn't really carry enough weight, either.

More from: murphymob@skynow.net

BI.MA 1999



TM: This Italian rapsallion seems to have a penchant for all things Kraftwerk – or similar practitioners of the '80s bygone dance era – combined with a

healthy appetite for the darker side of techno and ambient trance. That's no criticism; lord knows, there's many a budding Germanic out there. But anyway, like many a dance producer, BI.MA churned out this mightily impressive demo with little more than a trusty Atari running Cubase, plus a few choice Roland synths of yesteryear – '101s, '303s, and the like. He's also got quite a knack when it comes to using minimal interesting vocal timbres, too. Keep glowing away, BI.MA!

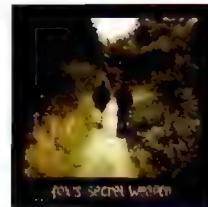
Sam: Bonkers noise-scape. I don't really know what to say.

Sil: Although of interesting construction, and featuring good use of sounds, perhaps this would be better placed as incidental music in a movie. It's not suitable signing material.

Luke: Fuckin' great! Atmospheric and well thought-out, though not entirely original. One of the best demos I've heard on this jury. Get it pressed and out there now while darker hard house and techno are selling!

More from: **Bisi** Tel: (Italy) 0347 1183482

FOX'S SECRET WEAPON DEMO



TM: Just when we all thought trip hop was yesterday's news, these foxy lads and lasses come along and blow theory out of water. OK, so Portishead and

Massive Attack haven't got too much to worry about, but there are some very cool textures and songwriting skills at work throughout this offering. And that makes it rather intriguing in itself. What these guys need to concentrate on, therefore, is acquiring an individuality of their very own. They're well positioned to do this, because they evidently know what they're up to. Advice? Lose the bloody bird noises for starters – crikey, how many *more* times are we gonna have to say that? Then you may well be on to something.

Sam: Brooding and dark. I would have liked to hear more of the vocals.

Sil: The singer needs a kick up the arse learn to deliver your vocal with more muscle balls! It's not an unpleasant voice, exactly, but it needs more direction on delivery from the producer. This could probably be much better.

Luke: Yet another Lamb/Portishead/Moloko clone. There are far too many to mention out there already.

More from: bjg@dcs.ed.ac.uk

a&r checklist

We receive a mountain of tapes every month, so to maximise the chances of having your demo reviewed (and, if you're really good, getting on *The Mix* CD) we need you to provide the following:

☉ Decent quality cassettes, (preferably chrome type II), CD, DAT or MiniDisc.

- ☉ A kit list of the gear used to produce the demo.
- ☉ A biography of the act. We want to know all about you, your studio and your production background!
- ☉ Artwork. This can be a picture of the act, or maybe an original groovy graphic.
- ☉ Most important of all, send us extremely cool music that genuinely deserves to be going places.

Unsolicited packages might be accepted at the following address:

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Bath, England BA1 2BW**



FRANK STONE DEMO



TM: This dude seems to like his Tangerine Dream on the rocks, with a dash of A-Ha and ska. A very odd combination, but, strangely, it kind of works. The synth

nuances harp back to '80s rubbish at some points, but I guess that's often the bane of being influenced by gurus of that time. Whatever. It makes for a good, if clichéd, listen, nonetheless – especially when you get to grips with the endearing production nuances that permeate the whole proceedings. It's all a bit irritating, damn it, but that's what the best pop records are all about, aren't they? Production-wise, some of the sounds utilised here are locked in a vacuum very far away from here, but it all kind of wraps up with unnerving simplicity. And that's likely to be the trump card when it comes to gaining interest from the world at large. Which leads us ever so neatly on to viability: whether there's much commercial potential here is debatable, but that really doesn't seem to be Frank's priority. What's evident is that he's having a great time with his tracks. And surely that's what will captivate people – maybe not today, but let's hope it happens very soon; it certainly deserves to.

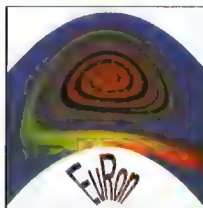
Sam: '80s avant-garde. Cool in a cheesy kind of way. I enjoyed this.

Sil: Starts off with Genesis circa 1973; ends up all ABC-like. Sorry Frank.

Luke: Frank likes The Cure!

More from: jh.gayner@talk21.com

EURON DRUMS



TM: This is really very captivating initially, but ultimately – a minute in, say – it smacks of rather dreary drum 'n' bass. Which is really quite a shame as this guy evidently knows

on which side his hardcore bread is buttered. It's very easy to fall into a trap of imitating your idols – Goldie and LTJ Bukem in this instance, I reckon. Fortunately, Euron manages to avoid such plagiarism, but only just. The tracks here have all the mayhem of those obvious influences, but are really in need of some serious musical identity of their own. Less reliance on loops would be a good start, as would the inclusion of some sexy female vocals. I know we're always banging on about the virtue of adding additional band members, playing live – all the things that make people part of some great musical collective, but the concept *does* have its plus points: it gets you out to a wider audience, as well as attracting the attention of some big swingers – well, we can't promise that, but it's gotta be worth a try! And most importantly, it's the single best way to get the old creative juices flowing, so that when returning to the confines of the studio you know what you're setting out to achieve.

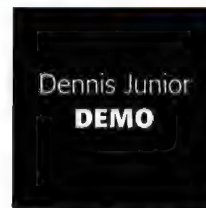
Sam: This didn't really do anything for me.

Sil: It's pretty boring. A real killer voice and top line vocal certainly wouldn't go amiss here.

Luke: How annoying – it sounds like listening to Teddy Riley – trapped in a jar!

More from: mxmalo.eron@virgin.net

DENNIS JUNIOR DEMO



TM: Our Dennis has absorbed more than his fair share of '80s pop. Now, that could be viewed as a major criticism; but, hey, we all still dig ABC and Thomas Dolby, don't

we? The point being that our man here has absorbed shed-loads of influences and damn well knows how to use 'em. Great use of many an analogue synth is out in force, as are some nifty hi-hat parts and well-selected snares and kicks. Not so sure about that dodgy slap bass or portamento string pad, though – pale Prince imitation, y'all. In all, Dennis Junior knows his analogue from his anal; knows how to shake it, and can churn out some very well-crafted choons to boot. If he wants to make a killing in the commercial arena he may need to temper his passions a little, however. Admirable efforts, and ones that give Dennis some real clout and kudos, but I suspect that some of those stuffy office types at record company HQ may not be able to categorise this. Perhaps there's something to be said for staying true to what you know and love, after all. And on that score, it's pretty obvious where this guy's at.

Sam: It all started very 'in yer face', but then went all lame.

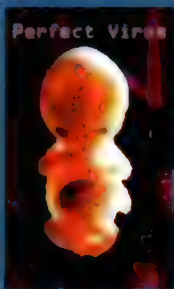
Sil: it may work on the dance floor but not for my stereo.

Luke: Kraftwerk on acid! Maybe not. As a standalone track, this is nowhere near strong enough. Further exploration required.

More from: dsandro@hotmail.com

demo of the month

PERFECT VIRUS: DEMO



TM: Kinda industrial, these guys – with a smattering of drum 'n'bass, and some very credible pop sensibilities to boot. An exceptionally well-selected drum loop kicks things off to perfection before maniac guitars, wonderfully squelchy basses and what can only be described as grooves to die for enter the mental fray. Without wishing to defame the

Perfect Virus crew, there's an energy present here akin to Jesus Jones and Tears For Fears, but, unlike those guys today, it's fortunately not locked in a time capsule. Taking influences that are obviously close to the collective heart of Perfect Virus is paramount, and these stretch from Nine Inch Nails to Filter and Aphex Twin. Strange combinations, perhaps, but ones that slot wonderfully into the whole ethos at work here. In terms of production and general feel, it's a joy, too: all the parts are well selected and well thought-out. Ya know when U2 did Pop, or even *Achtung Baby*!

yet retained all their credibility? Well, that's kind of what Perfect Virus are about. All they need to do now is get their asses on the road, get some serious rawk attitude, and get back into a studio with that whole attitude exaggerated and even more credible. Neil Sahgal, the ReBirth and Logic Audio Platinum brains behind PV is in a seriously strong position to really make a stab at having a style named after him. And with a bit more dedication, it's only gonna be a matter of time.

Sam: A pretty decent stab at the 'industrial' rock/dance crossover area. PV has all the right ingredients – moody vocals, nasty guitar riffs and what have you. I only wish it could have been even heavier still.

Sil: This sounds like hundreds of bands. It's anaemic, wishy-washy, unoriginal pap! The cool aloof attitude apparent in the vocal delivery is annoying, and leaves me cold. This is a poor man's automated 'Black Hole Sun', clearly 10 years out of date and really desperately bland.

Luke: Well put-together, angst-driven NIN/The The clone that unfortunately goes nowhere! Shame

More from: perfectvirus@hotmail.com



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Various: Anatok Pocket Mapper, £45; Pocket Record, £25; Roland Pad-80, £175. Tel 01275 331107 after 8pm or 07808 391677

Various: Boss SE-50, includes rack adaptor, £160; Zoom 1202, £60; Akai SGO1, £80; MAM VF11 vocoder and filterbank (same as ProCorder PCP330), £180. All prices include p+p. Tel Danny on 00 32 3542 0411 (Belgium) or e-mail: syndromeda@planetinternet.be

Various: Complete home studio: Roland VS-880 digital audio recorder, first edition, 64 virtual tracks, 500Mb hard drive installed, without effects board, but can expand, hardly used, £319; E-mu ES182 sampler, 32Mb RAM installed, with SCSI connector, Iomega Zip drive, X-Static Goldmine 2, 3 & 4 Zip disks, 4,500 samples, £566; Spirit By Soundcraft Folio 12:2 mixer, £109; Alesis NanoCompressor, £69; Boss RPD-10 panning delay, £39; Zoom Studio 1201 effects, £49; PC 486, 100MHz, 8Mb RAM, Windows for Workgroups, Cubase Score V2.0, dongle, two MIDI inputs in, four MIDI inputs out (64 channels of MIDI) with monitor, Windows 95, keyboard, mouse, £249. Equipment in immaculate condition. Everything £1,299. E-mail: crrm16@aol.com

Various: Complete MIDI home studio: Apple Performa 5300 PowerPC, 24Mb RAM, 100MHz, 1.2Gb hard drive, MIDI, MacMan MIDI interface, Philip Rees splitter, Cubase, BIAS Peak LE sample editor, SFX Machine plug-in; Yamaha MU90R XG synth module, effects processor; XGEdit software for Apple; Akai SGO1 piano module; Casio CZ-1000 synthesizer; Yamaha RY10 rhythm programmer, immaculate and with manuals, £999 (will split). Tel David on 0117 944 6814 (Bristol)

Various: E-mu Orbit V2, £349; Yamaha TG500 with RAM card £295; Korg EX8000, £225; Casio RZ-1 sampling drum machine, £89; Roland WS-60 (Juno 106 with speakers), £325; Yamaha TG33, £95. Tel 01705 250846

Various: E-mu Orbit V2, £350; Evolution MK149 MIDI trigger keyboard, 4-octave, as new, boxed, used three times, £90; Yamaha EMP100 multi-effects processor, cables, £75. Offers accepted. Tel 020 8744 9718 or 0951 110187 or e-mail: robert@speight.demon.co.uk

Various: Ensoniq ESQ1+ with cartridges and flightcase; Roland Sound; Canvas, Kawai K1R with cards; Alessi MicroVerb II; Frontline X8 stereo mixer, all for £500. Tel Paul on 01637 872754

Various: Fostex DMT8 V2; E-mu ES132 sampler; Digitech Studio Quad; Roland U-110; Studiomaster 12:2 desk, all boxed, with manuals £1,500 (can split). Tel Martin on 01933 676832 (Northants)

Various: Korg SQ10 sequencer, £500; Korg MS20, £400; Roland SH-101, £220; Roland JX-3P, £120. Tel Andrew on 023 9237 1815 or e-mail: andrewparkar@btinternet.com

Various: Kurzweil MicroPiano, manual, boxed, £190; CEM Real Piano expander, great sounds, DSP effects, manual, cost £350 new, will accept £190; Alesis SR16 drum machine, good condition, £85 ono. Or £450 for

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Various: Novation BassStation rack £250; Roland JV-1080, £500; E-mu ES4000 Turbo, Zip, £750; Clavia Nord Lead rack, £700; Novation Supernova, £800; Studiometer Mixdown Classic 52.8:16.2, £1,000; various effects. All sensible offers considered. Tel Chris on 0114 232 1771.

Various: Roland JD-880, £650; Juno 60, £350; Juno 106, £350; Novation BassStation, £140; Korg Wavestation, £425; Kurzweil K2000, £850. Tel Stephen on 0114 268 5757

Various: Roland JV-1080, with vintage board, £550; Roland Juno 106, £400; Roland U-220, £200; E-mu EMAX II, £400; Ensoniq VFX, with four cartridges, £350. Tel Rob on 01279 834426 or Darren on 01279 520186

Various: Roland JV-1080, mint, boxed, card, £500; Casio CZ1000, £50; 486 PC, Windows 3.1, monitor and printer, £80; Atari ST, monitor, £60; 100W PA (pair of wedges), £80. Tel Graham on 01780 752325

Various: Roland JV-1080, with vintage expansion board; Boss SE-50 effects; Roland Juno 1; Casio CZ-1000; Alan 1040, with new monitor, swap for Novation Supernova or Roland JP-8080. Tel 01283 564084 (after 8pm) or 07939 431190 or e-mail: david@smallplanetz.freemove.co.uk

Various: Roland SC-88 Pro, £275; Digitech Studio Quad £250; Seck 18.8.2 Mk II, £300; Casio VZ-10m, £85. All in excellent condition. Tel Drew on 01376 330799 after 7pm or 020 8787 2409 during the day

Various: Roland MC-50 sequencer, £100; Korg analogue delay, £50; Roland U-110, £50; Korg EX800 expander, £50; Tube guitar preamp, £100; Marshall Valvestate stereo power amp, £75. Tel 01252 668567

Various: Roland TR-909, £600 ono; Jen SX1000 funky-looking synth, three-octave keyboard with knobs, £100; TG55 16-part sound module, £80. Tel Martin on 01472 362792 or e-mail: martinwrightnrm@hotmail.com

Various: Yamaha A3000 V2, 1616 hard drive expansion board, 2Mb RAM, 17 months old, boxed with manual and demo disks, £800; Yamaha SY77 synth £450; Yamaha MV1602 rackmount mixer, £150; Yamaha FX500, £50; rackmount unit, 12U high, £80. Sensible offers or accept £1,450 for the lot. Tel Chris on 01325 212932 (Darlington)

Various: Seck 18.8.2 desk, £400; Fostex Model 80 reel-to-reel, £350; Boss SE-50 Pro studio effects, £125; Sansui MDR7 MIDI-to-tape sync controller, £100; VP11 parallel/MIDI port, £30; Pearl Effector OC-07 octaver, £25; Boss DD-3 digital delay £40; Boss GE-7 equalizer, £25; Boss PSM-5 power supply and master switch, £25; CryBaby wah-wah, £40. Tel 01403 274144

Various: Yamaha SY85 keyboard, plus extra sounds, £400; Yamaha TG500, plus extra sounds, £350; Aleis MicroVerb II, £65; SPL Stereo Vitalize, £110; Behringer Dualflex 2 enhancer, £80; 6U SKB flightcase, £90, 8U SKB flightcase, £100; Pioneer double cassette player, £65; Yamaha A100 power amp, £115, Soundquest MIDI Tools for PC, £20. Tel Carl on 01507 606956 or e-mail: carl@stocks.freemove.co.uk

Various: Yamaha TG33, £95; TG500, plus RAM card, £295; Waldorf Pulse, £215; Korg EX8000, £199; Roland JD-990; Casio RZ-1 sampling drum machine £99. All with manuals. Tel 01708 250846

Waldorf Microwave II, like new, £400; DM1000 delay with knobs, £99; Quadraverb Plus, £179; Roland JV-80 keyboard, with sliders and effects, £499; FL01 flanger pedal, £49. Tel Tom on 01584 353694

Yamaha SY85, plus factory disk and manuals, £400 ono; Alan 1040STE, £140 ono; Mackie 1604 VLZ, manuals and box, £450 ono. Tel Timmy on 0798 907 7862

WANTED

Boss GE-21 graphic equaliser. Will pay up to £60. Tel Chris after 6pm on 01232 236093

Clavia Nord Lead 1 or 2 keyboard (if 1 expanded) and a Roland SH-101 (colour doesn't matter, although red would be nice). Would also be nice if they were mint and the manuals were there, maybe even boxed. Tel Brett on 01635 847608 or e-mail: subzeror@claramail.com

Dimension D chorus unit required in good condition and perfect working order. £200 offered. Tel Eddie on 07880 524815

Ensoniq MR61 expansion boards: Urban Dance and Perfect Piano. Tel Zyg on 01332 297434

ETI 4000 home synth, spares needed, main connection board to enable rebuild, will pay. Tel Neil on 01256 356258 (Hampshire), will reimburse phone charge

Manual urgently needed for Ensoniq P34922-BLH sampler and synth. Write to Mark at 63 Longmyrd Road, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 1HJ or tel on 07989 699987

MIDI files created by live drummers wanted, Autocore program also sought. Will buy or trade for sample CDs or AWE64 card with 32Mb expansion board. E-mail: edward.mcgee@ucd.ie

Novation Nova. Will trade either my Roland TR-909 or Juno-106, both in great condition. Tel Brett on 01635 847608 or e-mail: subzeror@claramail.com

Roland S-760 sampler with power sampling expansion, cash waiting. Tel Andrew on 07939 517166

Sheet music compositions of legendary bossa nova composer, Antonio Carlos Jobim, also a decent set of Latin percussion samples for Akai S-series. Help would be appreciated greatly. Tel 01506 634008 between 4pm and 8pm

Sound cards for Roland U-220 and Yamaha TG55, MFC05 or MFC10 Yamaha MIDI foot controller. Tel 01908 226191

SyQuest EZ Flyer 230Mb needed. Does any kind person trust me to borrow one for a few hours? Mine's bust and I need to transfer my samples on SyQuest disks. Tel Dan on 01902 682331 (Wolves area)

Yamaha CS6x synth. Must be in good condition, will pay about £400. Tel 01934 419070 FM

PERSONNEL

27-year-old dance producer is looking for Northampton-based vocalist/guitarist for sonic collaborations. Tel Duncan on 01604 720752 after 7pm or e-mail: duncan@musica2000.freemove.co.uk

Bass player and singer wanted for indie dance band. Influences include Ian Brown, Chemical Bros and Apollo 440. Tel 01225 815506

Dance music producer seeks like-minded DJs and musicians for collaboration on new projects. Into all styles of dance full circle. If keen, tel Mark or Debz on 07899 0473938 or 07787 907211

Drum 'n' bass collaborator wanted in the Birmingham area, dark style, ie. Bad Company, Usual Suspects, etc. Tel Andy on 0121 684 2705(Birmingham)

Dance music producer/engineer with own fully-equipped studio available. Tel Dave or Angelo on 0161 755 0168 or 07939 049086.

Drummer available for work. Experienced session drummer working for name bands on the electro scene. Get your own tailor-made samples or full tracks. Recording facility available. Tel Nik on 020 7704 2871

Experienced composer/producer with own studio available for composition, arrangement, production, remixes, editing. Any style, all projects considered. Tel Joe Williams on 0113 295 6111

Freelance dance music producer, engineer, composer and programmer with own studio (hard-disk recording) working from home, very cheap and competitive rates, no job too small, specialising in dance and electronic music (trance, d'n'b, big beat, house), multimedia production. For a free quote, tel Mark on 07808 126997 or e-mail: tsytreccords@excite.com

Freelance producer/engineer/composer /programmer available for projects. Specialising in dance music programming. No job too small. Need drum loops programming? Then I'm your man! Tel Mark on 0780 812 6997 or e-mail: tsytreccords@excite.com

Hammond organ player available. Backing tracks, lead, any style. Tuition available in own studio MP3/live. Tel Ron on 01729 860345 or e-mail: charm@daelnet.co.uk

I'd like to help you get a record or publishing deal. If you're serious about the music industry as your ultimate goal, visit <http://website.lineone.net/~radio.won/>

Karaoke/backing tracks produced and mastered onto CD by experienced industry pro. Also, tuition in composition, song-writing, music for moving image. Tel 020 8883 8299

Lead and rhythm guitarist wants keyboardist, bassist and vocalist to form industrial-type band. Must be dedicated; main influence is Nine Inch Nails; must be between 13 and 17. Tel 07790 816660 (Gravesend area)

London-based producer with own equipment specialising in hip hop, R&B, jungle and garage, offers services to people wanting to make tracks. Tel 07957 480674 or e-mail: lazereccords@hotmail.com

Management producer for a London-based live and gigging techno punk band. Previous experience essential. E-mail: mutlate@mutlatejsnet.co.uk

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Programmer/keyboard player wanted to form song-orientated, post-2000 electronica, trip pop-influenced band. Should be ambitious and have vision. Tel 020 7538 2073

Pro Tools/web whiz Kid wanted as full-time assistant by Rock music producer, Centray/North London, low pay/long hours, suit recording school graduate still living at home. No DJs or dance merchants, please! E-mail: Standen@btinternet.com

Programmer/keyboard player required to form song-orientated, trip pop, electronica-influenced band. Should be ambitious and have vision for analogue/atmospheric sounds. Age 21-30. Tel 020 7538 2073

Remixes: pumping quality dance mixes for only £95. Accept no others. Tel Flow Motion Remix Services on 01257 421683 or 07946 695653. Remix credits include Positiva, Novamute, Devinyll and Unifed

Simon Hartley from Wakefield College, '89-'90; Jason '08' Cordingley seeks you for electronic, 'future' collaborations. Tel 07944 374553 (leave message and number, if interested)

Techno breakbeat outfit - DJ and synth grinder - have hot beats; want to hear from labels. No time wasters! Tel Lucie on 020 8257 1202

Technological genius required to join guitarist and vocalist (synths, samples, recording, gigs, etc). Influences: Massive Attack, Depeche Mode, Joy Division, Portishead, Curve. Tel Craig on 0161 445 9050 or Paul on 0161 494 8396 (South Manchester)

Very talented tech-house/trance producer with finished tracks seeks label for release. Tel Dave on 01452 302107

Vocalist wanted for funk/soul project. Commitment, talent and bags of enthusiasm required. We're gonna go somewhere; you can too! Tel Steve on 0116 260 7671

Wanted urgently: finished production demos of original dance music for Dublin-based record labels with global distribution for possible future release and/or licensing. Underground club styles (tech house, deep house, prog trance, techno). CD/MD demos only to: PO Box 6831, Dublin 11, Ireland or e-mail: impulsivemusic@eircom.net or tel/fax: 00 353 86 2515169

HELP!

Liquid Sound Dept wants to find a brave label to promote and release this highly original sound. For a demo tel 020 76398410 or e-mail: liquidsounddept@hotmail.com

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20 unsigned/undistributed quality dance producers, singer/songwriters with demo, wanting own label for distribution; vocalists available to finish tracks; serious entrepreneurs; also seeking to develop quality manufactured labels. Tel 07980 390135

Aaargh! Loads samples for sale: some audio, some WAV, dance, industrial, techno, guitar, house, drum loops, instruments, vocals; some music applications/programs. Cheap prices. Tel 02392 783399 anytime

A&R production company seeks genuine established labels, distributors and management for liaison of major quality groomed signings. Professional, recently successful companies only. Tel 01386 882068

Cheeky Chas Corporation requires demos of trance, hardcore, techno and hip hop for press and distribution. Send to PO Box 172, Torquay, TQ2 6XY

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Dark Aspect 10-track album. Any labels out there interested in dark ambient mix of electro/techno? CDR demo available for audition. Tel Paul on 02890 346677 (days) or 02890 502368 (eves/weekends), or e-mail: pprout@allstate.com

Done Runnin'/Step Up (Inna' Life), the latest big beat/trip hop project from K-Man. For a free download

please visit: www.peoplesound.com/artists/K-Man. Feel free to leave your comments. For biogs, more sound clips and photos, plus other artist downloads also visit: www.futureformulas.com

Dapulse? Inject DaPulse EP - six tracks of tech-house/trance, uplifting elements on CD. Quality tunes at a non-profitable price. Only £2.00 including p+p to D Smith, 23 Wilton Road, Gloucester, GL1 5NJ

Demos wanted for collection of new record labels. House, techno, trance, drum 'n' bass beats. Send to 48 Donegal Ave, Whitehead, Northern Ireland, BT38 9NB

Demos wanted for dance label. All styles - two-step garage required for - specific project. Send to Mark at MCL, 122 New Cross Road, London, SE14 5BA

Demos wanted for various projects by new dance label. Send tape, CD or DAT to Mark at MCL Records 122 Newcross Road, London, SE14 5BA

Do you like trance? Strong melodies? Songs you remember? MP3 downloads? Yes? Then go to www.vtammic.com, type 'hugo' then click on 'hugo' and download Million Stars (electronic/dance section)

Don't be afraid of the bleep bleep, intoxicating electronica from ndot. Three tracks remixed by Chris Carter. Listen at www.ndot.co.uk or buy at www.peoplesound.com/artist/ndot

Electronic label seeks new artists in the south. All styles considered. Tel Steve on 0118 377 8034 or e-mail: loudsoundrecords@hotmail.com

Established London breakbeat label looking for artists and producers, funky hard trance and nu-skoool styles, all welcome, send demos to: Abstract Data, PO Box 21545, London, E10 5FX

Free MP3s at www.tsytreccords.com

Independent record label wants an artist for future release, into any kind of deep dance music. Send demo(s) to Auto Repeat Recording, 6 Kensington Court, Buckhill, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV10 9BY. (Tapes and biogs only)

Korg Trinity sounds in PCG format on floppy disk. 256 new programs, home-programmed and highly-specialised for dance enthusiasts - drum 'n' bass, trance, house. Cheques or POs for £5 to M Wheawill, 41 Woodend Road, Flitton, Urmston, Manchester, M41 8QY

LA Musichack is a brand new Web site soon to be launched, offering new upcoming artists/programmers the opportunity to have their talent aired and sold over the Net. So if you're making drum 'n' bass, jungle, reggae, hip hop, speed garage, swing, jazz please send your demos (cassette format) to LA Musichack, 7 Fieldside, Putney, Bedford, MK42 0HD tel 07718 278936 any time

New, ambient electronica label wanting demos, please send tapes, CDs or MiniDiscs and other information to PO Box 244, Horley, RH6 8JQ. All demos sent to us will be listened to

New, hungry management company looking for bands with the "f*** me!" factor. You must be able to perform live. Send demos and blurb to LCM, PO Box 29391, London, W2 1GE or tel 07050 289630

New Italian label group is looking for quality house, garage, techno, drum 'n' bass and any kind of electronic dance music. Please send demos and covering letter to: AWS, Via Ugo Balzani 21, 00162 Rome, Italy or see Web site for MP3s: www.awsoundsz.com

New label seeks demos for forthcoming releases Acid, techno and quality underground sounds required. Please send tapes and CDs to Hi-Punk records, 18 Glamis Road, Dundee, Tayside, Scotland, DD2 1ND

New online record shop listening post seeks good-quality bands and artists. Send demos, biogs and contact numbers to Horizon Music, Elegant House, Whessoe Road, Darlington, DL3 6QT or e-mail: horizonmusic@hotmail.com

Pacific recordings are looking for exciting and innovative material to sign. Progressivehouse, deep house and trance only. (No Euro). Tel George on 01772 517799. (No time wasters please)

Promote your music on the Net, visit the virtual A&R list for profiles of Internet record labels, articles and more: www.sean.co.uk/var

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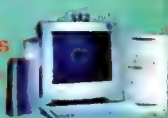
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